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AND THAT REMINDS ME









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Stanley Coxon

AND THAT REMINDS ME
BEING INCIDENTS OF A LIFE SPENT AT
SEA, AND IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS,
BURMA, AUSTRALIA, AND INDIA
BY STANLEY W. COXON ❧ ❧
WITH FORTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

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DEDICATED

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD MACDONNELL OF SWINFORD

P.C., G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.



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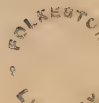
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PART I
SEA DAYS

A





CHAPTER I

EXPLANATORY

IT was on the morning of 16th July 1912 that I was down at the Folkestone Golf Club practising for a match which I had engaged to play that same afternoon at two o'clock. I can remember that it was a day of glorious sunshine—sunshine in fact such as no one can appreciate to the same extent as an Anglo-Indian, for it maketh his heart rejoice. I was feeling as fit as the proverbial fiddle, and went home to lunch fully resolved to wipe my opponent in the mud from one end of the course to the other.

“But, alas ! how easily things go wrong—
A sigh too short or a kiss too long.”

That game was never played. Feeling seedy I 'phoned my friend asking him to postpone the game until after tea, and by tea-time I was in agonies. The following day I was informed that I was suffering from appendicitis, and within forty-eight hours of the first symptom of pain, a specialist was down from London operating on me in my own house with a view to saving my life. He arrived in his car in the middle of the night, and by 1 A.M. I had been relieved of my appendix. 'Tis a funny world, my masters, and that reminds me of a funny remark on the subject of the appendix, made by our cook. Mrs. W—— was in my room with my wife when I first came

to after the operation, and, though suffused with tears, she was delighted when I told her to clear out and get me something to eat. The next morning when my wife was in the kitchen, discussing the butcher and the baker, Mrs. W——, referring to me, said: "Well, I call it right down bad luck on Mr. Coxon. This is the third big operation he has had, and some people go through life without having one at all: and after all," she said, "what's the use of a 'cul-de-sac' in anybody's stomach!"

Some ten days after the operation, when the tubes had been removed, and I was beginning to convalesce, my better half became troubled in her mind as to what she was going to do with me during the long period I had in front of me before I would be allowed up. She said, "You won't 'jig-saw,' you can't sew or knit, so the only thing I can suggest is, that as you've had such an 'awful past,' you should take a pencil and paper in your hand, and, in the intervals of reading, jot down, if only for my information, some of your reminiscences. As far as I at present understand this 'awful past' you have been everything but a cab-driver, but I should like to know something definite about it."

And that is how what follows came to be written. As a matter of fact, I *have* been a cab-driver. Many years ago, alas how many! I well remember a certain hilarious night in London driving a hansom with nine on board—five inside, two on the top as luggage, myself in the driver's seat and the driver standing on the step! We were of course eventually held up by the ubiquitous man in blue—but that is another story, and we must to our muttons.

Well, I set to work and, without the remotest idea of

ever seeing the thing in print, wrote down from memory the various episodes which occurred to me. One day an author friend of mine was good enough to wade through the papers, and startled me by telling me that he thought it ought to be published. "What, however, it wants," he added, "is something more personal about yourself."

"What?" I said. "It's nothing but *I, I, I*, as it is."

"True enough, O King," he replied. "What I mean is you don't enlighten anyone in this MS. as to who or what you are, and in the case of reminiscences this is a *sine qua non*."

To comply with his request I may say at once that I am the third son of the late Colonel George Stacpole Coxon of the 45th Regiment, one of seven brothers, six of whom served her late Majesty in various capacities, and the seventh, who did not, was, it goes without saying, the only one of the lot to make any money. My mother was the daughter of the late Major-General Hicks, C.B., and was in her day one of the belles of Jersey. As a young man my father saw considerable war service in South Africa, but when I first became acquainted with him he was a captain at Chatham, later on Commandant of Landguard Fort, and finally, so far as the army is concerned, Colonel commanding the 4th Depôt Battalion at Colchester. Shortly after this he came on the roster for foreign service in command of his regiment, but my poor mother's health was by that time so bad that he was reluctantly compelled to throw up his command and retire from the service. For years we lived at Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire, and then, when my mother died,

moved to London, where my father was appointed private secretary to the second Duke of Wellington. He held the appointment for over twenty-six years, and had perhaps the unusual experience of serving in that capacity three successive dukes.

CHAPTER II

Join my first ship and make my first voyage down Channel—A cure for sea-sickness—Liners of the 'seventies, their accommodation and the diet provided for passengers and crew

NOW for my story. Originally I was intended for the Navy, and at the early age of twelve had my nomination for that fine service—in my opinion the finest in the world. But my dear mother was opposed to any of her boys going away to be drowned at sea, and her opposition lasted until I was excluded by the age clause.

In 1875, a year after my mother's death, the sea was still calling me, and I gave my father no peace until he consented to my request and enrolled me as a midshipman in the Merchant Service. For the privilege of being styled "midshipman," as opposed to "apprentice," my father had decided to send me to sea in one of the old Blackwall Line of sailing ships trading to the East—one of the only two lines which specialised in the former commodity. To the uninitiated the classification may seem a distinction without a difference, but to us boys the difference was a very real one; for whereas an apprentice is bound to a firm for a term of years, and can be made to do menial work of any sort or description, a midshipman is a free agent to come or go at the end of each voyage, and can only be compelled to do work pertaining strictly to that of a sailor. The term is of course

a comprehensive one and capable of expansion, for while a midshipman could not be made to serve in the cuddy—a lot which has fallen to many a good apprentice—he could be ordered to help the boy “Stiggins” to get up coal, or the “young sprigs of aristocracy,” as we were sometimes sarcastically called, could be sent along to lend the butcher a hand to clean out the pig-styes! On the other hand, I well remember one voyage while we were lying alongside the pier at Melbourne, we middies asserted ourselves to some purpose, and point-blank refused to carry out an order which we considered degrading. We were placed under arrest by the chief officer, but in the morning, when hauled before the skipper, he upheld our contention, and we were at once released. Of course for these so-called privileges we had to pay heavily, and my first voyage to sea, including outfit, mess money, and premium, must have cost my father fully £150. And I know he always contended that sending me to the Merchant Service cost him every bit as much as it would have done had he sent me into the Navy. It is a service which for some reason or other has always been looked down upon, and I dare say it will astonish many people to learn that in the Blackwall Lines it was the exception to find a man who was not a gentleman born and bred. In my own ship, on my first voyage, of the twelve officers on board including midshipmen, no less than seven were the sons of parsons; and how under the circumstances the ship ever reached port in safety has always remained a mystery to me. For sailors are never partial to “sky-pilots” or “devil-dodgers,” as they term them, and don’t take any too kindly to their progeny.

On the 1st November 1875, in company with my father, and decked out for the first time in my life in all the glory of brass buttons and a badge cap, I proceeded by train to Gravesend to join my ship. As he was a guest of the owners for the night; we took up our quarters in the saloon and dined with the captain and officers. Little did I realise that as I sat at that table it would be the last square meal I was to have for three and a half months! And what a transformation scene was shortly to be enacted! The next morning, after bidding my parent good-bye, we cast off from our buoy and proceeded to sea. We took fourteen days to get from Gravesend to Plymouth! 'Tis difficult to believe in these days of twenty-five knot steamships, motor cars and aeroplanes, but none the less a fact. From the moment we opened out the Channel we struck a furious south-west gale, and were compelled to run for the shelter of the Downs on no less than three occasions. Will that trip ever fade from my memory? Never—and a more miserable little worm than “yours truly” during those fourteen days was never found on board ship. And may I be allowed to describe how I became permanently cured from seasickness? The remedy may be of use to some of you. Try it. On the second night out it was blowing a full November gale. A huge sea was running, and it was raining, snowing, and freezing. Under these appalling conditions, somewhere about two bells in the middle watch, when I ought to have been on deck, I was discovered in a complete suit of smelly oilskins lying crumpled up on the deck alongside my sea-chest, sobbing my heart out. Suddenly the door was torn open and a voice as

if from a megaphone demanded to know who the —, what the —, how the —, why the blankety-blank-blank wasn't I keeping my blankety watch on the blankety-blank-blank deck!!

Then, seized by the end of my sea-boot, I was hauled out on deck, and the next moment, before I could realise where I was, a huge sea had struck me and sent me flying across the deck, where I lay jammed and all but drowned underneath the spare spars in the lee scuppers! Bruised, and damaged and bleeding, I was again hauled out and made to keep my watch on the poop, and each time I was sick forced to get a blankety bucket and a blankety broom and clean the blankety mess up! But Arthur Paget, the second officer, though more or less of a bully, was not quite the inhuman brute I then thought him. After about an hour of abject misery, when I didn't care a damn whether I lived or died, he took me up in his arms, and carrying me to his cabin, gave me a stiff glass of grog and tucked me up in his own bed. The cure was complete. I have never been sea-sick from that day to this, and anyone who doubts the efficacy of the remedy may try it. No rights reserved.

Before sailing from Plymouth let us take stock of this magnificent liner of the early 'seventies and see how she compares in comfort and accommodation with the leviathans of the present day. There she sits upon the water, a fine full-rigged ship of the old frigate class, with gun ports fore and aft, and the old-fashioned large quarter galleries at her stern, a ship of 1000 tons burthen with a complement, including crew and passengers, of possibly three hundred and fifty souls all told, and with luck she will probably reach her destination, Melbourne, in something



Photo. by Hughes & Co

ONE OF THE CRACK LINERS OF THE SEVENTIES



under four months. First-class passengers were accommodated in the poop, where the cabins were large and roomy, and, having the large gun ports as windows, instead of the more modern little portholes, especially well ventilated. The sanitary arrangements were somewhat primitive, for while each cabin contained its own W.C., such a thing as a bathroom, or even a bath, was not to be found anywhere on board. The passage money was from £65 to £80 per head, and the food was good and wholesome. Live stock of all sorts was carried, and fresh milk provided by a real live cow! In fact one of the great inducements offered to sail in these ships was to be found in the shipping advertisements of the daily papers of those days, where it was announced that each ship carried an "experienced surgeon, stewardess, and a milch cow." Frequently, however, the cow was found to be more experienced than the surgeon, who was usually a young blood just freed from his hospital. A curiosity nowadays is the fact that the cabin dinner was served at 4.30 P.M., and on Sundays and Thursdays champagne was provided free by the Company. On the whole, cabin passengers were well treated and, beyond *ennui*, had little to complain about.

Second-class passengers, who paid from £30 to £40 a head, were located immediately under the saloon deck. From five to six were berthed in a cabin in which the only furniture to be found was a number of wooden shelves to sleep in. Beyond this, nothing. No bedding or bed-linen. No table kit or requisites of any sort. Everything had to be provided by the passenger, and there was but one steward and a boy to look after some sixty to eighty of them. Their food consisted mainly of salt

provisions with a certain amount of bouilli beef thrown in, and by way of luxuries they were served out with a pint of the most villainous draft porter daily, and a bottle of port—not exactly a vintage wine—on Sundays, when they were likewise provided with a fresh meat joint.

Third-class passengers occupied the whole of the rest of the 'tween decks, and paid from £18 to £25 per head passage money. Theirs indeed was a miserable lot, and one's heart went out to them in their misery—especially at the commencement of a voyage, which nine times out of ten was made in tempestuous weather. With no stewards to look after them, the male members of the family, most of them prostrate with sickness, had to do the best they could. And I don't think I know of a more ludicrously pitiable sight than that of a sea-sick male trying to stagger along a wet and slippery deck in a seaway carrying a stinking piece of salt junk for the family's mid-day dinner!

In bad weather, when the hatches had to be closed and battened down, the conditions of the lower deck where men, women, and children were huddled together for sometimes days at a stretch can better be imagined than described. Their lot was only a trifle better than what we read of in Clark Russell's books of the life on board the convict ships of days long gone by.

And now we come to the officers and crew. The former had cabins and lived as first-class passengers. We middies were accommodated in a deck-house in the waist. The sheep and the pigs were in pens on either side of us, and on top were the poultry, consisting of turkeys, geese, ducks, and fowls. In fact we were in the midst of a sort of farmyard, and as the waist of a ship

is just where all the *green 'uns* come aboard, the noise and the stench and the filth and the water were our companions in about equal parts. The crew were herded together under the fore-castle head in a sort of Dark Hole of Calcutta, where you could neither see to read nor write, and where, to prevent your breaking your neck by falling over the cables, two foul-smelling slush lamps were kept always burning. Such a thing as tables or seats were unheard-of luxuries, and meals, such as they were, were devoured more after the manner of wild beasts feeding at the Zoo than as human beings. And in point of fact sailors were in those days looked upon and treated as such, and if proof of this is needed, let me, in addition to the above, tabulate the daily ration of food provided for them by the large-hearted shipowner of the day, and sanctioned for them by the Government of a country calling herself "the Mistress of the Sea."

*Scale of Diet sanctioned for Ships sailing under
the Merchant Shipping Act.*

	Bread or Biscuit	Beef	Pork	Flour	Peas	Rice	Tea	Coffee	Sugar	Water
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	pts.	lbs.	oz.	oz.	oz.	qts.
Sunday . .	1	1½	...	½	...	...				
Monday . .	1	...	1½	...	½	...				
Tuesday . .	1	1½	...	½	...	...				
Wednesday	1	...	1½	...	½	...				
Thursday .	1	1½	...	½	...	...				
Friday . .	1	...	1½	...	½	...	1 of an ounce daily	½ an ounce daily	12 ounces weekly	3 quarts daily
Saturday .	1	1½	...	½	...	½				

Go through the items carefully, ye guzzlers of the Carlton and the Ritz, and try and realise how we boys, better born and better bred than many of you, subsisted on such a fare day in and day out for sometimes over four months at a stretch. No fresh meat, no bread, no butter, no eggs, no milk, and three quarts of water a day, out of which your tea, your coffee, and your drinking and washing allowance had to come! Did we wash every day? I don't think!

On the other hand, our life, in spite of material drawbacks, chief of which of course being the want of decent food, was not all of a gloomy colouring, and when we once got to sea and settled down and things became a bit ship-shape, we soon forgot our troubles. In fact many of the voyages I made were very happy ones, and when it is borne in mind that the old Blackwall Lines of sailing ships carried 75 per cent. of the pioneers of Australia, and that passengers were on board ship from $3\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 months, and sometimes even longer, it is not matter for surprise that many lifelong friendships were then formed. I am in the sere and yellow myself now, but I can recall some really heart-breaking partings we boys had with members of the fair sex, and as far as I am personally concerned I cannot remember a voyage in which I was not desperately in love. And each time deeper than the one before. The dear lassies were always kindness itself to us middies, allowing us privileges which, I take it, they would not have granted to more staid and elderly partners. At least I hope not, for we had wonderful ways and places for hiding ourselves away when off duty. Yes, in many respects they were happy joysome

days, and sailors, especially youthful ones, have the happy knack of always making the best of things, as well as hay, while the sun shines. After all, the sea is the healthiest of all lives, and perhaps that accounts for it. Some of us must have been laid up occasionally, I suppose, but not for the life of me can I remember any single instance of anything serious occurring during my numerous voyages.

And yet when one nowadays tries to realise the hardships and privations of the long long ago it is difficult to conceive how we youngsters got through with it. For it must be borne in mind that in every completed voyage to Australia and back, in the old sailing-ship days one completely circumnavigated the globe, as you went out via the Cape of Good Hope and home round Cape Horn. As I made eight of these voyages I can say that I have been eight times completely round the world, and as when you reach your 180th degree of longitude you have to put in an extra day so as to correct your time, I have, I suppose, lived eight days longer than the ordinary man. It is a curious fact, however, that in my eight endeavours I never seemed to strike this longitude on a Sabbath, nor have I ever come across anybody who has. Not that it matters much on board ship, for work has to go on on the Sabbath more or less as other days, though it is generally less when it is possible to make it so. But the first commandment in the sailor's Catechism is always taught early to the young aspirant. It runs :

"Six days thou shalt work and do all thou art able,
On the seventh thou shalt holy-stone the deck and scrape the
cable."

It was always rough and cold enough on the outward voyage when running the "Easting" down in latitude 44° to 46° , but it was nothing to the homeward bound voyage round the Horn, when you were frequently down amongst the ice in the region of the sixties. Every night at eight bells on this portion of the voyage the routine of the ship was to pipe all hands to grog, and reef the mainsail, and it was a very necessary precaution, as the gales and the cold are stronger and more intense there than, I believe, in any other portion of the globe. I remember as if it were yesterday once, somewhere off the Cape, being called out at about 2 A.M. to clew up and furl the mainsail. It was blowing a terrific gale and freezing hard, with icebergs in quite dangerous vicinity. The sail was a brand new one, and frozen like a board, and in spite of the fact that every man-jack of us was on that yard we none of us reached the deck again before 5.30, or in other words it took us over $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to furl that sail. And, in spite of the weather we knew we were going to experience, we middies were generally more suitably clothed for the tropics. Ships in those days used to lie at Melbourne for sometimes two or three months. Our pocket-money at the most lasted one, and we had to live. Youth will be served. And it was remarkable the number of nautical instruments, watches, &c., that were lost overboard on these voyages! When "uncle" had advanced all he could on these sorts of articles, then clothes and boots had to go, and towards the end of a stay in port it was quite the usual thing to see, any evening after dusk, a couple of midshipmen struggling along the wharf on a visit to their "uncle" up at Sandridge with a bag of all

the available kit from the midshipmen's berth for exchange into money. I know I never arrived in England on any one voyage with a pair of boots to my name, and my brother George, who was generally deputed to meet me on arrival at the docks in London, used to complain that it cost him about £3 a time to provide me and my pal with boots, beef, and beer. The one dream of bliss for the sailing-ship midshipman during the whole of the homeward voyage was on reaching terra firma to gorge himself with :

Beefsteak and onions, *ad lib.*

Apple tart and cream, *ad lib.*

Beer or ginger beer, *ad lib.*

And we were all the same. God bless us !

CHAPTER III

Burial at sea—Thunderstorm off the Cape de Verde Islands—Ship struck by lightning—A near shave from annihilation and our escape

A TRAGIC and pathetic incident occurred on board during our return journey from Melbourne. A beautiful English girl of some eighteen summers, having been crossed in love, had eloped with the man of her choice, and taken ship to Australia. She sailed in one of our ships, and everything went well with the happy couple until within a few days of their reaching Melbourne, when the poor girl woke up one morning to find her husband dead in the cabin. She never got over the shock ; and, after landing at Melbourne and attending the funeral, took passage by the first ship homeward bound of the same line—and it happened to be ours. Never have I seen a more beautiful woman, and, as we all knew her sad story, she had a full share of our sympathy from the first. We soon, moreover, found that her nature was as sweet as her face and she quickly became the idol of our young hearts. To move her footstool or chair, to run an errand for her, or to do any other little odd job was looked upon as an honour, and as our work during the day was generally on the poop, one or other of us was in constant attendance. But as time went on it was easy to see that she was gradually becoming weaker and more wan, and when she finally left the deck we instinctively knew

that we were not to see her again. She eventually died just north of the Line, and her funeral was my first experience of a burial at sea. And never shall I forget that scene. From the skipper downwards there was not a dry eye on board, and when, with the main yard aback and the bell tolling, we solemnly committed her poor frail body to the deep, the sorrowful silence which reigned supreme became almost painful.

To alter slightly Longfellow's beautiful words :

"There fell upon that ship a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features pale and thin,
And softly from that hushed and darkened room
Two angels issued where but one went in."

There were no marconigrams in those days to announce the sad event, and when we eventually came to our journey's end and berthed the ship alongside the quay in the West India Docks, the poor bereaved parents came on board to welcome and forgive their erring child.

About a fortnight after this burial at sea we found ourselves in the vicinity of the Cape de Verde Islands, where, as if the heavens had expressed a wish to join in our recent sorrow, we experienced a thunderstorm the like of which I never wish to see or hear again. It is of course a locality celebrated for thunderstorms, and I can hardly remember ever sailing by the Islands without getting one, but this particular one was a masterpiece. Throughout the day we had been in company with an American sailing ship with whom we had held a long conversation by means of flags. Towards the evening, seeing the gathering gloom on our lee, we both commenced, as a precautionary measure, to handle our light

kites. Suddenly down came the rain, and though quite close together—in fact too close to be comfortable—we completely lost sight of each other. The wind dropped to a stark calm, and the ship commenced veering round like a teetotum, the while thunder and lightning and rain such as I am sure never was before or since. We had already clewed up the royals and topgallant sails, and were all aft busy hauling up the mainsail, when a blinding flash, together with the most infernal crash that was ever heard, simply stunned us. Every man dropped automatically, let go his rope, and put his hands up to protect his head. For a few moments there was absolute silence fore and aft, as if we were in the presence of the dead, and then, realising we were still alive, we set to again, sailor-like, with laughter and ribald jokes, to continue the work of snugging down. In the brilliant illuminations caused by the lightning our American friend could be seen hard at work on a similar job, while the rain continued to fall at the rate of about an inch a minute. I have spoken already about our allowance of fresh water, and it was on a night like this that we made merry and clean. As soon as all danger was over, the entire crew, as well as nearly all the males on the ship, were to be seen dancing about the deck in their “altogethers” with a bar of soap in one hand and a scrubbing brush in the other; while the deck itself was strewn fore and aft with any old sort of clothing which would stand washing. In the morning it was found that to account for the awful crash overnight the ship had been struck by lightning. The miraculous part of it was that though two boys were busy on the main-royal yard when the main-royal mast

was struck, neither of them was touched nor knew anything about it. The mast was so badly splintered that it had to be replaced, and the lightning conductor, which consisted of a stout copper rod about four feet long, was picked up on deck in the shape of a perfect corkscrew. Our captain had a new conductor made for our new mast, and the original was, as far as I can remember, presented either to the British Museum or some other similar institution as a curiosity. The American had escaped unhurt, but both ships agreed that the experience was unique.

The next adventure I can recall was during either my fourth or fifth voyage, when we were all but shipwrecked.

We had just completed a trip out to Australia, and were actually burning blue lights at Port Philip Heads for a pilot, when our ship was struck by a sudden squall which caught us aback. It was so sudden and strong that for a moment it was a question whether the masts could stand. They did, and we gradually got her away before the wind and snugged her down. We were not again seen or heard of for sixteen days, and as the ship's name had been duly signalled at the Heads, the idea that she was lost was generally believed. And lost she very nearly was. A heavy gale set in, and we were gradually but surely driven down amongst the islands in the Bass's Straits. Being able to show nothing but storm canvas, and with a sea which the Southern Pacific alone can put up, once close to a lee shore and it was Lombard Street to a China orange against our ever getting off it. Each day it could be seen more clearly what we were in for, and each day the nasty inhospitable and totally uninhabited rocks which comprise this group of islands got

closer and closer under our lee. Already we had suffered severely. The second day out, while in the act of wearing ship, our foretop-gallant mast and bowsprit had gone by the board. One boat had been smashed to pieces, and another badly damaged, while several of the crew and passengers were injured, some severely. Added to this the ship sprang a leak, and from that day onwards the pumps had to be manned day and night, if only to keep her afloat. At last, one morning at daybreak, it was evident the crisis was not far off. It seemed as if there could be no escape, for, unless we were able to weather a large sugar-loaf island now immediately on our port bow, our fate was sealed. All hands were on deck standing by the braces, and everyone, including the passengers themselves, was fully alive to the danger which was staring us in the face. All eyes were riveted one moment on the shore and the next on the skipper, for the safety of the ship and every soul on that ship depended on the skill and seamanship of that one man. And there he was, though by no means a lovable fellow, a gentleman, a sailor to his finger tips, full of confidence in himself and his ship, cool and collected. What more can you want? It's many years ago now, but as I write I can see him standing by the compass clad in a complete suit of oilskins, smoking his pipe, but with his eyes fixed and watching, watching, watching! Suddenly the orders shot out: "Square the main yard!" "Starboard the helm!" "Top-men aloft and loose upper-topsail!" He had realised that it was now impossible to clear the danger on our lee, and that the only alternative was to up helm and run for it. It was a perilous attempt and

none knew it better than the skipper himself, for he knew what we didn't, and that was that beyond the island we could see there was further danger and that this last move of his—though the only one possible—was but a gambler's last desperate plunge. For no sooner had we sailed through the opening than ahead of us loomed more breakers only a few hundred yards away, crashing on a long low-lying reef, forming a second and complete barrier to the open sea. Getting under the lee of the sugar-loaf we immediately lost the wind, and there the ship lay hopeless and helpless, literally between the devil and the deep sea, rolling gunwale under to the huge waves, and at the same time drifting slowly but surely to certain destruction. "The old man"—as a skipper is familiarly called on board ship—had so far never uttered a word except to issue an order. He now addressed us. Coming to the break of the poop, he said: "Well, men, I've done all I can; the rest is in the hands of one greater than I. If a slant of wind comes we may get through—if not, we're done!" And we all roared with laughter. Why? We simply couldn't help it. There was a great big lout of a fellow, a second-class passenger, and the father of a large family, who on hearing the skipper's words burst out into the most lugubrious howl I've ever heard issue from a human's throat. And the worst of it was he kept on blubbering until even those of the women who were on deck could not resist a smile. And I verily believe it was that feminine smile which saved us. At the psychological moment the wind came, our sails filled sufficiently, and we grazed by that reef literally waiting to hear our sides hit it. Within a very few hours after this the

storm fell and the wind freed. Battered and bruised, with spars gone and sails torn to ribbons, with her hull sorely strained and leaking like a sieve, the good old ship crawled back once more to Port — and to fresh provisions.

On our return we caused a great sensation, and all Melbourne came down to see us. The Sandridge Pier at which we lay was crowded with sightseers to see the ship and crew which had had such a miraculous escape, and on Sunday, when excursion trains were run for the purpose, we midshipmen had the time of our lives.

Eight good-looking youngsters in badge caps and brass buttons were told off to do showmen, and it was only human nature if each of us looked out for something attractive to take round. Money with us was always at a premium, but somehow or other the afternoon teas in the midshipmen's berth on those occasions were exceedingly popular. Tea was taken out of tin pannikins, and the refreshments did not come from "Rumpelmayer," but there were other diversions, and, after all, youth will be served.

When we came to discharge the cargo it was easy to see how badly the good old ship had been damaged. In the lower hold she had a cargo of bags of salt, and so great was the leakage that the whole of the salt had come up in the pumps! the result being that the rest of the cargo on top of the salt, consisting chiefly of cases of stores and spirits, was lying on the flooring, smashed to pieces. The stevedores employed discharging that cargo had many a good free drink while so employed, and you may bet your bottom dollar that a few bottles which had never paid customs duty found their way into the midshipmen's berth.

CHAPTER IV

I go into steam—The eruption of Krakatoa in the Sunda Straits—
My attempt to go to Darkest Africa with Stanley

AND so endeth the record of my sailing-ship days and I now go into steam. Returning one voyage after being eight years in the Company, and having completed eight voyages round the world, I was calmly informed that my services would be no longer required. It was bad enough for me when I was only a fourth officer, but what about the men who had grown grey in the service of the firm? They were treated in exactly the same way, viz. the shipowners' way. They had no further use for them, the ships were all to be sold, and as the captains and officers were no longer of any marketable value, they could all run away and play. Good-bye and God bless you! In my own case, my father being a personal friend of the chairman of one of the steamship lines, I selected that particular line for a fresh start. I made several trips to India and Australia, and it was during one of the latter that we had an interesting and exciting experience. It was in a certain Royal Mail steamer when she was outward bound through the Sunda Straits making for Batavia. I was navigating officer at the time, and I was soon to discover what a remarkably easy thing it is, within a very few minutes, to lose the biggest and best ship that ever floated. Having sighted the evening

before the Sumatra coast, we knew that next morning we should require to see the island of Krakatoa before shaping our course to enter the Straits. Krakatoa was in those days a large uninhabited mass of rock standing right in the middle of the entrance. Ever since we made Flat Cape, which is the southernmost point of Sumatra, we had experienced heavy torrential rain, and at 9 o'clock the captain sent for me and asked me to work out, as far as possible, the position of the ship. Knowing the danger of the situation, I was very particular as to the result, and, before taking it to the captain, got the first and third officers to make independent calculations. Taking the average of the three—and they were all within a mile or two of each other—I handed to my skipper the position of the ship at 9 A.M. as correctly as it was possible to ascertain it. But I am glad to be able to say that as a precautionary measure I wrote on my position slip that *no allowance had been made for any current one way or the other*. This made the ship to be at 9 o'clock that morning a clear twenty-six miles from the island of Krakatoa.

The captain, myself as navigator, and the third officer were all on the bridge. It was still raining heavily and nothing could be seen a hundred yards ahead of the ship. It was as if we were in a dense fog. At a quarter to ten, the captain, turning to me, said: "I shan't risk it any longer; turn the ship round sixteen points." "Aye, aye, sir! Port the helm! Half speed. Steady. Stop her." The ship was now facing exactly in the opposite direction, and the engines were only kept moving sufficiently to keep her head straight. About twenty minutes later the

rain ceased, and on looking astern I saw what appeared to be a sheer precipice of rock directly over our flagstaff. "Full speed ahead!" I yelled. Out came the sun, and the rock was the island of Krakatoa! We had on board at the time, all told, about 550 to 600 souls, and had the ship continued for another quarter of an hour on the course we were then steering, there would have been an accident almost as appalling as the loss of the *Titanic*.

It was fated to be the very last look we ever had of that island, for on the return journey it had practically disappeared off the face of the sea. We reached Batavia homeward bound just after the terrible eruption of Krakatoa—which it will be remembered occurred on the 26th August 1883—and were detained there pending the report of a Dutch man-of-war which had been sent to ascertain the extent of the disaster. As a matter of fact our ship was the first passenger ship allowed through, and we were warned that it would be necessary to exercise extreme caution. As navigating officer at the time, my place was on the bridge, and I would not have had it elsewhere for a great deal. More than two-thirds of the island had completely disappeared. Numerous other small islands and rocks had sprung up like mushrooms in the course of a night, and the channel through which we had passed on the outward journey was now completely blocked. Some idea of the appalling suddenness and magnitude of the disaster may be gathered from the fact that the air-waves of the great explosion are recorded as having been heard as far away as Diego Garcia and Rodriguez, which are respectively 2375 and 3080 English miles distant from the volcano. The eruption occurred at

about 10 o'clock in the morning and by 11.20 there was complete darkness, which extended into the country for a distance of 150 miles. The damage to life and property throughout the Straits of Sunda was enormous, and the entire township of Anjer which existed on the southern or Java side of the Strait was washed off the face of the earth by the huge tidal waves which followed the eruption. By the inrush of these waves on to the land all vessels lying near the shore were stranded, and the various towns and villages devastated. Two of the lighthouses were also swept away, and the lives of 37,000 of the inhabitants, amongst whom were 37 Europeans, sacrificed. The height of the highest sea-wave which overswept Anjer is stated to have measured over 33 feet. Dead-slow was the order of the day, and groping our way through a sea of larva and pumice-stone, in which the wrecks of houses and other débris, floating corpses of men, women, children, and animals by the thousand, made our passage through the Straits on that occasion one of absorbing interest. I was on the bridge the entire time, and, from the numerous angles and cross-bearings we were able to take, compiled a chart of the New Channel, which together with my report appeared in one of the illustrated papers of the day. But for some reason or other it appeared under a name other than that of the author! Such is fame!

By this time I was getting weary of a sea life, and, realising that there was no future in it, I decided to take leave with a view to, if possible, striking out in another direction before it became too late. As luck would have it, before many months had elapsed something came along

which appealed to me immensely. Sir H. M. Stanley was at the time organising and recruiting for his great expedition to Darkest Africa, and, hearing that he was in need of a naval officer to take charge of his river flotilla for the navigation of the Congo, I decided to apply for the post. Through my father, I succeeded in getting an introduction to Sir H. M. Stanley, and interviewed him at his house in Piccadilly. To my delight he raised no objections, and after seeing my credentials, consented to take me on his staff as naval expert, provided that on the completion of the river journey I agreed to remain with him for a period of three years as a member of the exploration party. Nothing could have suited me better, and I then and there accepted the appointment. The printed agreement conveying these terms—which by the way I have by me to this day—was next forwarded to me, with the intimation that as the appointment was in the gift of the King of the Belgians I should proceed without delay to Brussels for the purpose of signing and sealing my contract with the Belgian Government.

On arriving at Brussels, where I was directed to report myself to General —, I found the gentleman away. As however I was stopping at the best hotel in the place and living on the fat of the land, entirely at the Government's expense, the absence of the worthy General did not inconvenience me in the least, and I managed to put in a thoroughly enjoyable time while waiting for his return. At last I was summoned to the presence. The General received me quite politely, but while informing me that my appointment had been confirmed, startled

me by adding that there appeared to be some mistake in the remuneration which I had been promised, and that it would have to be considerably lower. I expressed surprise, especially as the matter had been settled by the Head of the Expedition, and as it would be impossible for me to give a definite reply to his proposal, asked for time to consider my decision. This was granted, and I of course referred the matter home by the first post. I was anxious to go on any terms, but my father would not hear of it, and wrote saying that unless I received the terms already agreed to, I was to return at once to London. And to London I returned. It was in vain that I appealed to Mr. Stanley, as he then was. He either could not or would not do anything for me and I lost the appointment.

On reading *In Darkest Africa*, where Stanley hasn't a good word to say for any member of the expedition except himself, most of whom are now lying dead where he left them, I cannot help congratulating myself on my escape.

CHAPTER V

Proceed to India—"Giving-'em-fits," as applied to the Company I joined—Life on the coast of India—The coastal run described—A trip to Suakim in the Red Sea in a trooper—Join in the relief of McNeil's Zariba as a camel-driver—Try to pass myself off as correspondent to the *War Cry*—The General and myself the only two men in the force wearing white helmets

THE exploring idea having failed, and, seeing no other career open to me, I decided to take the bull by the horns and go out and serve on the coast of India, where promotion was reported to be more rapid.

I would prefer to draw a veil over this period of my life, as it is not one I care to discuss or look back upon, but as, in view of the recent terrible disasters in the shipping world, mercantile marine matters, and especially the treatment and pay of officers, are becoming a serious question, I think perhaps my experiences may be of some value in helping to arrive at a just conclusion on the case of Owners *v.* Officers.

Now the Company I had joined was a Scotch one, and naturally the management was in the hands of the "unco guid," or, in other words, of men who keep the Sabbath and every other d—d thing they can lay their hands on.

An officer of my time, who was a bit of an artist and a wag, designed a coat of arms for the Company which might well vie for cleverness with those which appeared

in *Punch* under the head of "Giving 'em fits." I forget it in detail now, but to represent the everlasting day and night work to which we were subjected—and, mind you, without any extra pay—he had the sun, moon, and stars in a prominent position on one of its quarterings. For its *support dexter*, there was a ranting Scotch missionary exhorting the natives to be strictly honourable and honest in their dealings with their fellow-men, and above all things to keep holy the Sabbath day. For its *support sinister*, he reproduced a typical example of a work-weary and disconsolate-looking officer, dirty and dishevelled, employed in his never-ceasing task of tallying cargo. He was depicted taking in live elephants. He had three in all, but to safeguard himself against possible shortage of cargo and consequential loss in pay, he gave a receipt for "three elephants *with one in dispute.*" The crowning glory of his masterpiece was, however, the crest, where a shock-headed Highlander in a kilt, with a terror-stricken countenance and eyes bulging out of his head, was seen madly chasing a two-anna-piece over the edge of a precipice! Unfortunately I forget the motto, but nothing for nothing and d—d little for sixpence would have been far too generous for the crew I am alluding to.

The life of an officer on the coast of India was, to put it mildly, an awful existence. The creed of the Company was to make money and still more money, and never under any circumstances to refuse cargo or anything else which tended to make money, and in carrying out this laudable principle no means were too contemptible for them to adopt.

What was known as the Coastal Run in those days

was the trip from Calcutta to Bombay *via* all coastal ports, and it took as a rule from twelve to fourteen days to complete. As there were some twenty-seven different ports of call, it is easy to see that two and sometimes three ports had to be done in a day. The detention at each depended entirely upon the amount of cargo to be dealt with, but the sailing of the ship from the last port called at was invariably so arranged that the next one would be reached under easy steam the following morning at daylight. The reason was obvious. No time was lost, and coal and therefore money was saved. And though it constantly meant that officers who had been working at their hatches throughout the livelong day had to go straight away on to the bridge and navigate the ship through the watches of the night, well, after all, they were only officers and were paid for it! “*And, mon, it was fine aicōnōmēē.*”

There was once a certain old lady who died leaving a sum of three hundred pounds to be divided equally between an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman, on the condition that, each out of gratitude and as a mark of respect to the dead, should deposit in her coffin the sum of five pounds. The Englishman, delighted with his windfall, immediately complied with the request and dropped in the five pounds. The Irishman, likewise congratulating himself on his luck, waltzed along and placed in the coffin a five-pound note. The Scotchman was the last to come along, and, finding the five golden sovereigns and the crisp five-pound Bank of England note staring him in the face, the temptation was too great for him. He succumbed and pouched the lot.

But to be strictly honest and honourable, and to comply faithfully with the old lady's dying request, he took out his cheque-book and wrote out a cheque in favour of the deceased, crossed it, and made it payable to order. He then deposited it in the coffin and waited reverently by the remains of his benefactress until the lid was securely screwed down previous to interment.

Such a thing as a day or half a day off was never even heard of, and the strict observance of the Sabbath, so dear to the conscience of the "unco guid," was in our case so much sanctimonious swank. The remuneration for this unholy system of sweating was, as far as I can remember, as under :

1st Officer, Rs. 100 to 130, or say from £6 to £9 per month.					
2nd	"	"	75	"	" £5 "
3rd	"	"	60	"	" £4 "
4th	"	"	40	"	" £2, 10s. "

I can only add, without fear of contradiction, that a more miserable existence than the life of an officer on the coast of India never fell to the lot of man.

I have only one pleasurable reminiscence of this period of my life, and that was when my ship was taken over by the Government as a "trooper" during the Egyptian War. And as the taking over of this ship enables me to give yet another illustration of the system of work indulged in by the Company, I do not hesitate to record it.

We were at the time full of cargo, and as no ship came under Government pay and control until she was empty and ready in every respect for Government service, it was to the Company's advantage to get us unloaded in

the shortest possible time. Continuous day and night work was obviously the quickest way, but as even officers are but human, such a course would necessitate their being relieved by shore tally-clerks for at least a portion of the time, entailing thereby additional expense. And this was a thing the two-anna Scottie in the crest could never under any circumstances tolerate. No; he had a much better method than that, and one he never hesitated to adopt in any similar circumstances. Orders were issued that the ship was to work *eighteen* hours a day until such time as she was ready to be placed at the disposal of the Government. I cannot quite remember how long this took, but it was either six or eight days, and the latter is the more likely to be correct. Just think of it for one moment. Imagine asking educated men in such a climate to work at their hatches for eighteen hours a day for eight consecutive days! It meant that while the coolies discharging the cargo, and the Lascars doing the ordinary routine work of the ship worked their ordinary hours, the wretched European officers had to get up at 5.30 and work solidly from six in the morning till twelve at night, without even an interval for meals. And all for the sake of saving the Company a few rupees and thereby swelling the dividends. It makes one a bit of a Socialist even to think of it. Having taken on board a detachment of the Army Service Corps, their impedimenta, and some two hundred transport camels, we proceeded to Suakim in the Red Sea and in due course arrived there. Transports were in and out of the port in those days within the twenty-four hours, and no sooner had we discharged our consignment than we were sent

out into the bay—to await further orders. Finding time hanging heavily on my hands—for there was absolutely nothing to do in the bay—and having made great friends with a certain Captain Cockram, I got permission to go on shore and stop with him for a few days.

The disaster at McNeill's Zariba had just previously befallen our arms, and when I landed active preparations were in full swing for a large force to go out to relieve the Zariba and bring in the garrison. The column was to consist of 5000 troops of all arms, together with the whole of the available transport—in all some two thousand ammunition mules and three thousand camels. Here was my chance. Knowing Cockram would be in the show, I determined to be there also. The regulations against civilians accompanying the troops were very stringent, but Cockram, who was a famous little sportsman, consented to let me take charge of one of his camels, provided that if I was discovered he was to know nothing about it. The orders were to fall in with the camels at 2 A.M. on some rising ground just outside the city walls, to await the arrival of the escort. The European camel-driver was amongst them, and the sight which met his eyes at daybreak, when regiments could be seen approaching from all directions and suddenly converting this unwieldy menagerie of animals into a solid and well-protected square, was fascinating in the extreme. It was all new to me and I would not have missed seeing it for a very great deal. Next to appear on the scene was that fine native regiment, the 9th Bengal Lancers, who were to act that day as scouts, and finally before five o'clock up came the General and his staff. A few brief words

with his Brigadiers and then in a few moments the welcome order to march was given. Sir John McNeill was in personal command, and it was soon easy to see that he was not going to court any repetition of the disaster he had just previously asked for at the Zariba.

As the enemy had been sighted shortly after our leaving Suakim, we were not allowed to move fifty yards at a time without the bugles sounding the halt to close up the square. I don't think we could have travelled a mile an hour, and it is necessary to try and conceive the picture of 5000 men in square formation with 5000 animals inside the square, travelling at the rate of a mile an hour in the desert sand under a scorching sun, and cursed with one of the plagues of Egypt in the shape of myriads of flies. The precautions were however unnecessary, for the *fuzzies* had had their bellyful on the day of the Zariba attack, and beyond mimicking our heliograph with pieces of tin they had picked up on the battlefield, they showed no desire to make a closer acquaintance. If I cannot properly describe the desert march how can I attempt a description of the sight which met us on arriving at the Zariba. The fight was then only a few days old, and though our men had been able to bury and burn their own dead, it was a matter of impossibility to extend this consideration to their foes. It will be remembered that women, and even children, took their place in the fighting line of the fanatics. The slaughter had been terrific, and on every side of the Zariba the dead bodies of men, women, children, horses, camels, and mules were lying in hopeless confusion. And the stench!—but no, it would be too gruesome to go into further details. Suffice it to say that, once the neces-

sary precautions had been taken to protect the troops while at work, it didn't take long to demolish the Zariba and set fire to everything that would burn; and the garrison showed commendable zeal in helping to give effect to this order.

While inside the Zariba I had an amusing little encounter. Assuring myself that my disguise was perfect, and with a sense of satisfaction at having outwitted the authorities, I became rash and inquisitive. I wanted to know too much, when I was suddenly accosted by a staff officer requesting information as to my name and occupation. Pulling out a very large pocket-book and trying to look important, I replied, giving my name and stating that I was a *correspondent*.

The staff officer, also pulling out his book, said: "I don't appear to have your name on my list. May I ask what paper you represent?"

Seeing that the game was up and that I was discovered, I made a bold effort and replied, "*The War Cry*."

He was a good chap and took me off to the Berkshire mess, where he gave me a most welcome drink, and it was there I ascertained that my friend Cockram was responsible for my discomfiture. My disguise was fairly good, but not quite good enough, inasmuch as the only two men in the force that day wearing *white* helmets were Sir John McNeill and the reporter to the *War Cry*! I had foolishly omitted to put on a khaki cover.

As on the march out, so on the march home. The same formation, the same precautions adopted, and the same weary halts and vexatious delays. Much as I enjoyed the experience, I shall never hanker after marching again in the desert.

CHAPTER VI

My deliverance from white slavery—Join the Royal Indian Marine Service—A discourse on shipping matters of the present day

SOME few days after this pleasant little change we received our sailing orders and, after loading up with invalids and details, we were sent back to Bombay, where my brief interval of “trooper-cum-camel-driver” came to an end, and I had to resume existence as a tally clerk.

But my day of deliverance was not far off. By this time I had been promoted to the rank of chief officer, and it was when chief of a ship at Rangoon that a telegram was put into my hands from the Director of the Indian Marine, offering me an appointment in that service as a temporary first-grade officer for one year certain, with every probability of a permanency. Now Admiral Sir John Hext, R.N., the Director, was an old friend of my family's, and it didn't take me two shakes of a duck's tail to wire back accepting the appointment with my grateful thanks. In spite of my having, as a native would say, partaken of their salt for a period of years, I never felt less compunction in my life than when, getting into a boat with all my worldly belongings and with a firm determination never under any circumstances to break bread with them again, I bade the Company a permanent good-bye.

From what has been said in previous chapters it will

be gathered that I have no very high opinion of ship-owners as a class, be they English, Irish, or Scotch, and, in view of the recent terrible loss within a short period of such vessels as the *Delhi*, *Oceana*, and *Titanic*, the question arises whether ships nowadays are safer, and the management of them any better, than it was in my day.

The speed has increased from an average of 8 to 10 knots to that of 25, the tonnage from 1000 to 50,000, and the number of passengers from somewhere in the region of 400 to as many thousands. What precautions, if any, in the meantime have owners taken to ensure greater safety? The responsibility of the commanders and officers have—it goes without saying—increased enormously. Have their emoluments or their conditions of service improved in the same proportion? I doubt it, and, as far as I know, the pay of the officers remains to-day as it was before these leviathans were thought of. Ship owners will, in competition with other lines, build floating palaces to attract passengers, but it seems to me that as regards additional equipment or precautions for safety there are none. A captain, sufficient officers to navigate, and a few quartermasters to steer, and for the rest any land-lubbers or out-of-works who can scrub paint-work and polish brass are considered all that is necessary. Take the case of the *Titanic*, with its cabins-de-luxe, its golf courses and swimming baths, its restaurants and array of French chefs and other flunkeys, and yet it had not sufficient boats to accommodate a third of the people on board, or seamen to man those it had. And in one awful moment this pride of marine architects, this unsinkable phenomenon, takes a plunge from which it never recovers,

carrying with it every soul on board at the time to a watery grave. I see as a result of the inquiry into the loss of this magnificent ship, Lord Mersey is reluctantly compelled to the painful conclusion that some of the boats rowed away from drowning people without making an effort to save them. A nice thing to have said of British seamen ! But I say most emphatically they were not British seamen ; and it is the only merciful view to take. For such a thing to happen with the men I had the honour of serving with as a boy would have been a sheer impossibility. They were seamen in those days. They knew how to handle a boat, and what a boat was capable of doing when so handled. To say, as I have heard it said, that it would have been a difficult and dangerous task on a clear fine night to back a boat in amongst drowning people, with men knowing their business and ready on their oars to pull a stroke or two forward at the word of command, is to talk arrant nonsense. To expect the same thing of coal-trimmers, stewards, and cooks is another and a very different matter.

The *Titanic* might well have been fitted with double the number of boats, in which case probably double the number of passengers would have been saved. But in this connection it must be always borne in mind that the night in question was unique and a perfectly ideal one for boat-work. The sea was like a lake, and the ship stationary. To seek safety as people seem to be doing now in this foolish cry of boats for all is only to ask for further trouble. The first essential is by means of longitudinal and cross bulkheads to secure as near as possible the unsinkable ship. The next, useful and unsinkable

boats. But to place three or four cockle-shells where formerly there was but one, and by this means to provide boats for all, is not run riot. For every sailor-man knows that it is but eye-wash and window-dressing to inspire confidence in the timid passenger. Placed as these boats now are, some 70 or 80 feet above the water-line, not once in a hundred times could those in the davits be made use of, and for the rest, they would never even be thought of. Take, for instance, the more recent case of the *Volturno*, which was not a leviathan such as we are now discussing, and yet every single boat they attempted to lower was dashed to pieces before it reached the water, with the loss of every single soul in them. Picture to yourself the wreck of one of these floating townships in a gale of wind at sea. Imagine these boats of theirs stowed away on the roof of an ordinary London house—which is about their equivalent in height. The women and children have first to scramble up there to get into them and from that height to be lowered—not down the side of a stationary house on to the comparative safety of the street—but down the side of a huge ship labouring in a raging sea. Each foot the boat is lowered increases the length and therefore the swing of the pendulum, and each moment enhances the risk of the boat being dashed and smashed to pieces against the ship's side. And if she reaches the water, what then?

No. I have long been of opinion that in ships of the present size the only safeguard against danger of this sort is the provision on board and on one of the lower decks of properly constructed lifeboats, such as are to be found anywhere along our coasts. In case of emergency they

could be hoisted out by means of powerful derricks or cranes—such as are used in any of our battleships—swung well clear of the ship's side, and dropped by means of a slip-bolt bodily into the sea, whence they could be hauled alongside and filled with passengers. But in discussing this matter with an old brother officer of mine in the Royal Indian Marine, he has furnished me with a still better plan.

Commander E. Baugh, R.I.M., who has retired from the service, is at the present moment Marine Superintendent of the London & North-Western Railway Company at Fleetwood, and he writes as follows on the subject :

“If a certain amount, and possibly a considerable amount, of the space now devoted to pleasure could be allocated to boat and life-saving requirements in the large passenger liners of the present day, nothing could be simpler than to arrange for them. Boats of an approved pattern, such as you suggest, and capable of holding at least one hundred persons, could be placed on one of the lower decks not more than forty feet above the water-line, facing outwards on a cradle and on a slant, and when required could be released by a trigger line and shot through large ports or recesses in the ship's side specially built for the purpose. They would be of the regular lifeboat order and fitted with double bottoms, so that after reaching the surface they would empty themselves and could then be hauled alongside by the running line attached to them previous to being launched. The principle itself is no new one, for when I was in command of the R.I.M.S. *Clive*, one of the Indian troopers, a boat of this design was fitted on my upper deck, and I have

constantly launched her when at boat and fire practice at sea, invariably with the greatest success. She was placed at a height of some forty feet from the water-line, and within three minutes of launching she has been alongside, and certainly within another five filled with a complete complement of crew and soldiers. For vessels of 50,000 tons such as we are now building, I would suggest twelve of this class of boat, *i.e.* six on each side, each capable of holding at least one hundred persons. I may add that the *Clive* was built by Messrs. Camell Laird of Glasgow, so that all details regarding the design and construction of this particular boat are easily available."

Just so ! But then, you see, such a plan would entail a certain amount of passenger accommodation being sacrificed, and will the ship owner who wants his dividends, or the passenger of the present day who requires his Turkish baths and other Turkish delights, be prepared to make the sacrifice ? I doubt it. Perhaps the International Conference which is now sitting considering the subject of safety of life at sea will consider the matter. But again I doubt it. "Nous verrons."

There were once two opulent foreign Jews travelling in a magnificent liner when an accident such as I have been imagining occurred. In the middle of an awful night the orders were suddenly issued for "all hands to the boats." Ikey, thinking of all his ill-gotten gains which were about to be lost with him, was beating his hands in anguish on the deck, when suddenly to his amazement his brother Semite emerges from his cabin-de-luxe robed in one of his Rebecca's best nighties, a

mass of lace and blue ribbons. Says Ikey to Eckstein, "Gott im Himmel! Vy dis tomvoolery now?"

Says Eckstein to Ikey, "'Tis you who is de vool. Mein Gott! is it not de case of ze vimen and ze schildren vurst?"

Only recently Mr. Lloyd George has startled us with the proposal to set up a Minister of Lands to look after either pheasants or mangel-wurzels, or possibly both. How much more imperative it is that we should have a Minister of Marine to look after purely mercantile marine matters. Can the Board of Trade still be looked upon as sufficient and efficient when it is remembered that they allowed the *Titanic*, a ship of 50,000 tons, to go to sea with the scale of boat accommodation laid down forty years ago for ships of under 10,000 tons? And yet no one is hung for it. And so we muddle along only to go to sleep again until the next awful catastrophe occurs.

Fifty years ago the pay of the able seaman was £3 per month, and until the other day, when, to the astonishment of everybody, they were able to organise some sort of a strike, it remained the same. They struck and within a very few days gained an all-round increase to their wages of 25 per cent.!! Does this redound to the credit of the shipowner or the nation? And the case of the officers is much the same, only more so. Under most trying circumstances they have hitherto remained loyal to their employers, and have as a consequence been ignored simply and solely because the owner knows that the officer has no collective voice and cannot therefore make himself heard. But there is grave discontent abroad, and I am glad to find so important a paper as *Truth* giving

the matter prominence. When men are ground down, overworked, and underpaid, is it any wonder that when a crisis comes some are found wanting? My surprise is that one so often hears of splendid sacrifice, noble heroism, &c. &c., all very cheap, unrewarded, and soon forgotten. It was his duty and he did it! The pity of it all when there are so many splendid fellows only asking for justice and fair play. What does the nation say? Surely to the Mistress of the Sea they are a national asset worth consideration. But the worm will turn, and *Truth* warns us that before long we shall be faced, not with a disorganised strike of ignorant men, but with an organised strike of educated men, with whom will combine seamen, firemen, and stevedores—such a strike which may in all truth starve the nation. Let us look to it now. I have no axe to grind. I have severed my connection with the sea years ago, and when I say I wish such a strike success, there is no venom in the statement, but merely an expression of sympathy with a body of men for whom I have the greatest admiration, and who, because they have hitherto had no means of proclaiming their grievances to the public, have been systematically ill-treated, over-worked, and under-paid.

Note.—Since these words were sent to press, news has reached us of the awful calamity in the St. Lawrence River. Had the *Empress of Ireland* been fitted with boats such as suggested by Commander Baugh, I believe all or nearly all could have been launched. For it may be assumed that the entire contrivance for launching them would be mechanical, and that the

movement of a lever would automatically open the port and release the boat. Captain Baugh says he has had his boat in the water in the space of three minutes, and I understand the *Empress of Ireland* floated for about a quarter of an hour before she sank. Even supposing there was no time to get the boats alongside to fill them with passengers, the fact remains that there would have been eight or ten of these properly constructed lifeboats floating on the water available for the poor struggling wretches to swim to when the time for the awful plunge arrived. Each boat is constructed to hold 100 people, but under the prevailing conditions they could have held double that number. Nothing further need be said until the result of the inquiry into this appalling catastrophe is made public.

CHAPTER VII

Proceed to Port Blair—The Andamanese women's race—Appointed to the command of the *Nancowry*—The Andamanese—The Nicobarese—A drumhead court-martial—The survey of the Car Nicobar Island—Just retribution

IN case my readers may imagine that when I left the Merchant Service I became a sort of foot-soldier, I hasten to say that the Royal Indian Marine is a service which took over, under the Government of India, all the duties of the old Indian Navy. Being temporarily short of senior officers, the Government had authorised the Director to take on three officers selected from the Merchant Service, and I was fortunate enough to be his first choice.

On reporting myself for duty I found I had been appointed as first Executive Officer to the R.I.M.S. *Kwangtung*, which was at the time the guardship at the Andaman Islands, and as my orders were to join without delay, I lost no time in booking my passage to Port Blair.

As a passenger for the first time I thought no small beer of myself, and when on my arrival at Port Blair I found a smart officer's gig awaiting me, and in a brand new uniform with a sword dangling, mostly between my legs, walked up the gangway of my new ship, I realised that at last my days of tallying cargo were at an end.

I was delighted to find that for two of my messmates I was to have the other selections from the Merchant Service in the persons of Mr. J. M. Puttoch and Mr. T.



Photo, by E. H. Mani, Esq., C.I.E.

R.I.M.S. "KWANTUNG" AT PORT BLAIR



Eldridge. They were two of the best, and have remained my lifelong friends. We soon got into the run of things, and had a very happy ship.

Our duties were to act as guardship to the port, patrol the islands from time to time, and serve as the Chief Commissioner's yacht when he went on inspection duty.

The Andamans and Nicobars are, as everyone knows, a group of islands in the Bay of Bengal which form the penal settlement for the whole of India. In our time, I think I am right in saying that the total penal population was about 16,000 males and between 3,000 and 4,000 females. The rainfall is approximately 150 inches in the year, and while the climate of the Andamans is not bad, that of the Nicobars was so atrocious that it has since been entirely evacuated as a settlement. In fact when I was stationed there it was a common thing to report 50 per cent. of my men down with fever. And the Nicobar fever is quite the worst in the world. The penal settlement is situated on the middle Andaman, generally known as Aberdeen or the mainland, while the European population and the troops are all located on a little button island called Ross Island. Colonel Tom Cadell, V.C., C.B., of Indian Mutiny fame, was the Chief Commissioner, and to support him he had two companies of European troops, one native infantry regiment, and a Military Police battalion of 1560 Sikhs. The Royal Indian Marine fleet was represented by the *Kwangtung* at Port Blair and the *Nancowry* at the Nicobars.

Colonel Cadell—than whom no better chief ever lived—was a widower, but in all, including the wives of the

settlement officers, we had some sixteen to twenty ladies to help us to live; and the life there, though a trifle monotonous at times, was not at all unpleasant; while during the season we used to get a fair number of visitors to cheer us up. On Ross Island there was room for nothing but tennis; but crossing to Aberdeen, one could get riding, occasional cricket, and in the season some snipe shooting of sorts, though the birds were not plentiful, and the guns always too many for the ground.

We in the navy had six to four the better of the rest of the residents, for our periodical trips amongst the islands were always a source of variety and amusement. We generally had a cheery party on board, and the invitation to sail was eagerly accepted. The event of the month was the arrival of the monthly mail steamer, and the event of the year was the Annual Regatta and Sports. I shall have occasion to refer to the Regatta later on, but I cannot help here relating an amusing incident which occurred on my first visit to the Sports.

The entire population of Port Blair, including all the officials from Aberdeen, male and female, together with all the troops, were assembled on Ross Island for the purpose. There were the usual running and jumping events, for all of which we had large entries, but the *pièce de résistance*, which was on the card for 4.30, was the Andamanese women's race. Now it must be borne in mind that the Andamanese live on the outside islands in a state of absolute nature. Whenever permitted to cross over to Ross Island, it was the duty of one of the officials to see that their nakedness was covered. They are a jolly, cheery little race of people, none of them stand-

ing more than about 4 feet 6 inches high, and take everything as it comes along. On this particular occasion the precaution had been taken of wrapping the entrants for the ladies' race in pieces of sacking, tied round the waist with string. The parade being over, some sixteen dusky damsels formed up abreast of the starter. The course was cleared and all eyes were on the starting-point. "Are you ready?" said the starter. "Off!" and off went every wrap they had on them!

"Not theirs to reason why,
Theirs but to do or die,"

and no stupid piece of English sackcloth was to be allowed to interfere with the chances of any of our black beauties winning the much-coveted money prizes. We were all simply in convulsions, and the laughter of the Tommies could be heard reverberating in the hills. Even our gallant Chief, who was the judge at the winning-post, could not repress a blushing gubernatorial smile as he handed over the prizes! We heard afterwards that on their way to the starting-post the ladies had contrived to cut through their waist-strings with their finger-nails, so that they clearly engaged in the fray with but one mind and one aim and object, and with no false modesty. What a priceless snapshot this race would have made! But alas! we had no kodaks in those days.

Lying at anchor one morning we were somewhat surprised to find the *Nancowry* entering the harbour, and, on boarding her, ascertained that her commander was ill and that he would have to go on leave. To my great joy, being the senior officer present, I was appointed to

succeed him, and for the first time in my life had an independent command. What added to the enjoyment was that the Government had just then decided on a regular survey of the Nicobar Islands under Colonel Strachan, R.E., and both ships were to be employed on this duty.

Without going into detail over the enterprise, I may say that it was most fascinating work. Colonel Strachan was a delightful man to serve under, and finding that I would go where the *Kwangtung* could never dream of approaching, he and his party did most of their more interesting work under my auspices. We went into bays altogether uncharted, and I only once found a new rock by getting hung up on it! We rowed up rivers never before seen by white men, and altogether had a most thoroughly enjoyable and interesting time.

The Nicobarese, unlike the Andamanese, are not a nice race. The latter, who are of the negro type, are generally supposed to be the descendants of some cargoes of African slaves who were wrecked on the islands. But be this as it may, they are a bright, jolly, and sturdy little race, wonderfully expert with their bows and arrows, and in the water swimming and diving like fish.

At the entrance of the Port Blair harbour there is a buoy anchored in about $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms of water, denoting the extremity of a coral reef. One of the show sights of the place was to take a party of these merry mites off in a boat to this buoy, and at a given signal they would dive down, and forming themselves into a ring, with linked arms, sit down round the anchor absolutely immovable for the space of from two to three minutes.



Photo. by E. H. Man, Esq., C.I.E.

A GROUP OF ANDAMANES ISLANDERS



If you have never tried to sit down in any depth of water, the next time you go bathing do so, and you will then appreciate the difficulty of the feat. The water being like crystal, one could watch their every movement, and it was an extremely pretty sight. A still more marvellous performance was to see them shooting fish at night-time with their bows and arrows. The ladies of the party, in their usual full-dress, would lead the way, burning torches of the dry Toddy palm held well above their heads, what time the wee warriors would extend round them in a circle, and woe betide any fish which were curious enough to inquire as to the cause of the unusual light. I remember accompanying them on one occasion with a 12-bore shot-gun, hoping to astonish them with my prowess. I shot and missed by yards, when a naked little nigger five yards on my left presented me with that identical fish on the end of his arrow.

The Nicobarese, on the other hand, are a race of savages of the Malayan type with a most unenviable reputation for piracy and cruelty. They are repulsive in countenance, which is made more conspicuous by a habit they have of chewing betel nut and retaining it as a growth on the front of the upper teeth. They are, moreover, a lazy, drunken, and stupid race of people, whose only redeeming feature is the ability they show in the construction of their huts. But during the time I was down there I only had trouble with them on two occasions. The first was at Nancowry Island, the capital of the Nicobars, and where the three European residents consisted of Mr. E. H. Man, C.I.E., the Superintendent

who represented the civil ; Captain Le Gallais, in command of the detachment of troops ; and myself, representing the naval element. One evening, while Le Gallais and I were in our canoes bargaining with some natives on the beach for shells, two men came down to the waterside, both drunk. On their own initiative and without rhyme or reason they made the most offensive and disgusting gestures at us. Seeing that the villagers were having one of their drunken orgies, we deemed it advisable not to land. We left them, and reported the matter that evening to Man. Next morning, at daylight, we three representatives of Her Majesty, with an armed guard, proceeded in the *Nancowry* and anchored off the village. On landing we held a drumhead court-martial, and, fining the village 200 cocoanuts, took hostages as security back with us until the fine was paid. The only correct way of dealing with natives in any part of the world !

The second occasion was when on survey work I had been sent by Colonel Strachan with a survey party on board to traverse the Car Nicobar Island, while he was employed elsewhere on the *Kwangtung*. This island, though one of the smallest in the group, contains a larger population in proportion to its size than any of the others, and is the only one with an industry of its own, that of pot-making. The islanders, moreover, possessed a few very fine war canoes, in which they were accustomed to make quite long voyages, and were always more or less of a turbulent type. On the present occasion when we anchored, and the natives found a party proceeding on shore with instruments and maps, they became alarmed



Photo. by E. H. Man, Esq., C.I.E.

A GROUP OF NICOBARESE ISLANDERS AT NANCOWRY



and restive. So much so that in the evening I received a letter from Campbell, the surveyor, stating that he feared trouble, and suggesting that he had better take refuge on the ship for the night. As this would entail delay, I replied that I would come ashore to him with assistance. So ordering away an armed boat's crew, I went ashore with a number of rifles and ammunition, and in order to impress the natives who were in force in their war-paint on the beach, I started firing at bottles in the water. Being a very fair shot with a rifle, the practice had a good effect. The whole thing was, of course, simple bluff, for there was not a man with me who could have hit a haystack had he been asked to do so. We then joined forces with Campbell, and with the aid of some rum soon had the malcontents on the best of terms, and before nightfall it was safe to go back on board again. We were there altogether two and a half days over the survey, and as our friends continued more or less troublesome and stupid, I determined before leaving to teach them a lesson. We were due to leave at daylight, and knowing that such a thing as a big gun had never been heard by the islanders, I issued orders overnight to have the two guns loaded with the heaviest blank charge we could ram into them. As I anticipated, the entire population was down at the waterside to see us off, and my heart was happy within me at the idea of getting a bit of my own back. Heaving up anchor, we steamed in to the shore within a few yards of them and let fly our starboard broadside. Down flat on their backs went every single soul, as though they had been shot; turning quickly off went our port gun in the same direc-

tion, and within a few moments every man, woman, and child had fled screaming to the shelter of the jungle. I was more than satisfied. I reported the trouble we had experienced, and shortly afterwards the *Kwangtung* visited the Car Nicobar, and they were fined more cocoanuts !

CHAPTER VIII

My adventurous journey in the *Nancowry* across the Bay of Bengal—Second visit to the Andamans—How we won the Cup at the Annual Regatta—Kwangtung tailors; the making of a lady's riding-skirt—Escape of convicts from Port Blair—Convicts' marriage parade—I get the order of the boot

ON returning to Port Blair on the completion of the survey operations we found orders awaiting us for the *Nancowry* to proceed to Calcutta to be docked. It was an ill-considered order, as the vessel was far too small to cross the Bay of Bengal in the middle of the cyclone season, and had any other man been in charge of the *Kwangtung* at the time he would have ignored it and referred the matter back. My senior officer, however, did not like taking this responsibility, and loading up with a deck-load of coal, and borrowing one of his officers to assist me, we sailed for Calcutta. As it was impossible to stow sufficient coal for the voyage in the bunkers, we took as much as we could on deck, trusting to consume it while under the shelter of the islands, and before getting into the open sea.

Our departure from Port Blair was taken under none too promising conditions, and everyone in the know was aware that the *Nancowry*, never having been built for heavy weather, was asking for trouble; and two days after clearing the islands it was clear that we were in for it. I was compelled to get under sail, keeping two

full days' coal for a final rush, in case it might prove to be necessary. And it is to taking this precaution that we owe our lives. After losing the land we got no sights until the ninth day out, when I obtained a snapshot of the sun, which enabled me to work up an approximate position. Much to Hoggan's disapproval I decided to hang on to sail. The glass was still going steadily down, and everything meteorological was as bad as it could well be. We were a good forty-eight hours' run from port, even under the most favourable conditions, with coal only sufficient for thirty, so that no other decision was, under the circumstances, justifiable.

Instead, however, of the weather showing any sign of improvement, it got steadily worse, and in the middle of the night Hoggan awoke me to report that the wind had suddenly dropped to a dead calm, and that the barometer was still falling rapidly. It was the calm before the storm, and everything pointed to an approaching cyclone. Never in my life have I seen the elements more awe-inspiring or more ominous. No wind, a tremendous sea, with incessant lightning all round the horizon sufficient to blind one. And all this in a little hundred-ton cockleshell more fit for the Norfolk Broads than a competition with the greatest danger known to mariners in the biggest and best of vessels.

I hesitated no longer, but at once got up steam and let her go for all she was worth. Luck was with us, and though the gale was making rapidly, the wind became favourable, and the following night at midnight we made the Eastern Channel lightship, where, as usual, I expected to find one or other of the pilot brigs. Not one of them was to be



Photo by I. H. Mann, Esq., C.I.E.

R.L.M.S. "NANCOWRY" AT PORT BLAIR

FOLKESTONE
LIBRARY

seen, and on hailing the lightship through a megaphone, we were informed that nothing had been seen of either of them for the past two days. An unprecedented event, amply illustrating the kind of weather we had been experiencing in the Bay.

We eventually got into the river, picked up a pilot, and proceeded to Calcutta.

But now comes the tragedy. Shortly after entering the Hugli we met the tug *Retriever*, a vessel of two thousand tons and the largest and finest tug on the river, towing out a sailing ship of similar tonnage called the *Godiva*. They were foolishly going into it while we were coming out of it, and within one hour of passing us the *Retriever* foundered with all on board, and the *Godiva* was blown on shore at the sand-heads and became a total wreck. When too late the *Retriever* had cast off, but in turning round shipped a huge sea and foundered. The only soul picked up from her was a Lascar, who was found clinging to a hencoop, and who, when rescued, proved to be a raving lunatic. What would have happened to the poor little *Nancowry* had she been another hour on her journey!! And we arrived at Calcutta with only a few hundredweights of coal in our bunkers.

Our long residence at the Nicobars, coupled with the awful anxiety of the trip up, proved too much for us, and both Hoggan and I were compelled to go on sick leave, and before I was able to resume duty, the *Nancowry* had again sailed for Port Blair. On relief by her the *Kwangtung* came up also for docking purposes, and I found myself reappointed as 1st Lieutenant of my old ship. To our

joy our former commander found it convenient to go home on leave to England, and I was given temporary command of the ship while in dock and until relieved by Captain F. M. Barwick. Shortly after he joined we set sail and returned to the Andamans.

I would not refer to this second trip to the old place except that it had an important bearing on my future life. We were soon to find out that Barwick was a very different type of man to the gentleman he had relieved, and I may say here that he remains to this day one of my greatest pals. Shortly after our return to Port Blair we found everything stirring in the harbour for the great water event of the year, the Annual Regatta, and dining one night with Colonel Cadell at Government House, he inquired in a very acrid though jocular manner whether it was our intention to enter as usual the "Crab" and the "Snail." Now the Colonel was particularly proud of two things, his regiment of Sikh Police and his sailing boat the *Greyhound*, which was, and had been for years, the cock of the walk. In fact I don't think she had ever been beaten. The Chief's remark rankled in Barwick's mind, as it referred to our two cutters, and the following morning we had a consultation as to the steps to be taken to retrieve the ship's reputation. I told him that I considered we had some very fine boats on board, only that our late Commander, when entering, would only allow them to be sailed in *service* rig, which never gave them a chance.

We thereupon formed a regatta committee, subscribed funds, and selected three of our boats for experiment, the 1st cutter, the gig, and the jollyboat. The cutter



Photo. by Sherlock

COMMANDER F. M. BARWICK, R.I.M.



was the one I pinned my faith to. We added a false keel, rigged her as a full cutter with an enormous spread of canvas, and put Puttock, as being the dare-devil amongst us, in command. We knew that he would sail her under rather than lose a race, and we also knew that the man who was going to sail the *Greyhound* was gifted with nerves. The gig, a long narrow boat which would not stand any great height of canvas, was rigged with three lateens, and placed under the command of Eldridge, while the jollyboat I took under my own control. She was a great round tub of a thing, and the big Bombay bungalow sail we put into her suited her down to the ground.

The day of the regatta dawned quite to our fancy, for there was a fine full breeze with a nice chop of a sea. The more wind and sea the better it suited us, and before the start of the race, while we were jockeying for places, Puttock had the skipper of the *Greyhound* beat to the world. In fact he all but ran him down on three separate occasions, and each time with the blindest of smiles and the most profuse apologies. There were seventeen entries, all got off to a ripping start, and the result of the race was as under :

Our Cutter, <i>alias</i> the "Snail"	.	.	1st
" Gig	.	.	2nd
" Jolly	.	.	3rd

Colonel Cadell was the best of good sportsmen, and, although not liking his defeat one little bit, thought all the more of us for inflicting it. But I don't mind admitting here that had the two skippers of the cutter and the

Greyhound changed places, the latter would have won. "Experientia docet."

And that reminds me of another pleasant little episode we had with the Governor. He frequently had visitors stopping with him at Port Blair, and one of his favourite amusements for them was a riding picnic on Aberdeen Island. He had arranged for one of those on a certain Thursday, and on the previous Monday we were up dining at his house. In course of conversation after dinner, I discovered that one of his guests, a lady—and by far the prettiest in the party, I may add—had no riding-skirt, and she was bitterly lamenting her inability to go to the picnic. I said, "Put yourself in my hands, Mrs. Cumberlege. We are wonderful tailors on the *K.T.*, and we can guarantee fit and comfort." "Oh yes," joined in the Colonel. "They are wonderful fellows altogether these *Kwangtungites*. At least they think they are!" "Well, Colonel," I replied, "don't forget the *Snail*!!" Then turning again to Mrs. Cumberlege, I said, "Now that we are challenged, will you put yourself in my hands and I'll undertake to have a riding-skirt ready for you in time for the picnic." "Done with you," she said, laughing, "and I only hope you mean what you say." I didn't, and I hadn't the remotest idea how it was to be done, but the reputation of the ship was at stake, and I felt certain that by hook or by crook Mrs. Cumberlege would ride on Thursday morning with a sailor-built riding-habit. The following morning she came off on board to breakfast, and we took the few rough measurements we wanted. Everyone down there wore white drill riding skirts, so the material was quite

easily procurable. An ordinary skirt would, I take it, be a very easy thing to make, but what we were up against was how to fashion that sort of bonnet piece which fits over the knee. Ladies will appreciate what I mean. And if Mrs. Godwin-Austen ever reads these lines she will know for the first time how it was done and what use we made of the riding-skirt we borrowed from her. We took it and ripped it to pieces ! Then, laying each piece, on the deck, proceeded to copy it for the new skirt. When finished, except for the difference in the measurements, you couldn't tell one skirt from the other, and both were ready for wear on the Wednesday afternoon. Knowing the Chief and his party, including Mrs. Cumberlege, would be crossing over from Aberdeen that afternoon, I left orders with the officer of the day to report when his boats were in sight. On receiving his report I had the Chief's flag hoisted at the fore to attract his attention, and then when we saw him altering his course to the ship, the new skirt, washed and ironed, and attached to a bamboo frame, was solemnly hoisted at the main !

Mrs. Cumberlege rode the next morning in that very identical skirt, and it gave complete satisfaction. She took it home with her in triumph, and I believe she has it to this day. Have you, Mrs. Cumberlege ?

One of the important duties of the guardship while lying in harbour at Port Blair was the prevention of the escape of convicts by sea. Many attempts have been made, some extraordinarily plucky ones, and on one occasion a flimsy canoe with four convicts on board actually reached the coast of Burma and they got clean away. On an alarm signal, either by day or night, being

hoisted, armed boats were at once sent to patrol the north and south entrances to the harbour, and the ship got under way as soon as possible so as to proceed to any spot where she might be required. But without any such signal we were constantly practising this evolution, and prided ourselves not a little on the celerity with which it was executed. On one occasion, when down with one of my periodical bouts of fever, and staying ashore as a guest in Colonel Cadell's hospitable house, the *Kwangtung* was having a big guest-night, and the Chief himself attended the dinner on board. As a little bit of swank, and in order to illustrate to all and sundry what a particularly smart lot we were, Puttock, who was acting for me, had arranged with the jail authorities on shore to have the night alarm signal hoisted that night some time between ten and eleven o'clock, and I well remember the Chief telling me when he came ashore how remarkably promptly the ship had responded to the signal. When the boats went away a number of the guests, most of whom were officers of the garrison, went with them, and thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of the trip, until they were duly recalled by the recall signal from the ship. But horrible to relate, it transpired the next morning that during the very time the boats were away on this expedition, a canoe-load of convicts had actually made their escape from another part of the island! For the first and last time in my life I was glad I had fever! Fortunately for all concerned, the attempt was not successful and the convicts were recaptured. It was during this visit to Government House that I witnessed for the first and only time a convict marriage. When a male convict at

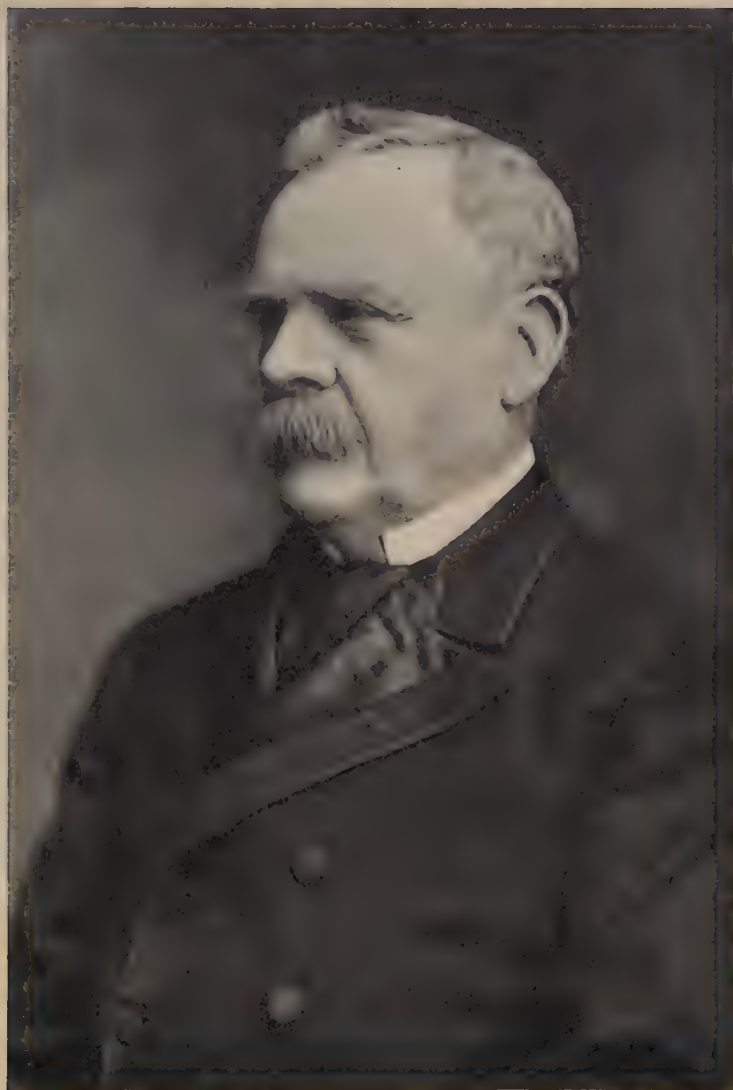


Photo. by Elliott & Fry

COLONEL TOM CADELL, V.C., C.B., CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF THE
ANDAMANS



the Andamans has passed ten years in the Settlement with a good-conduct character, he is granted a ticket-of-leave and allowed to live in a village and support himself. As soon as he is able to prove to the satisfaction of the authorities that he is in a position to support a wife, he is permitted either to send to India for his wife, if he has one and she is willing to join him, or to marry a convict woman who has served five years of her time bearing a similarly good character. At the end of twenty years (or twenty-five in the case of men convicted of murder and dacoity) the male prisoner is eligible for release, the wife, provided she has completed fifteen years, being released with him. Great care has, of course, to be taken to ensure that the marriages are valid according to caste rules, and inquiries have to be made in India before sanction is given to any marriage of the sort at Port Blair. In the case of Mohammedans, if the woman has a husband in India, it is necessary for him to divorce her before she becomes eligible for remarriage in the settlement, and on all occasions both parties have to be pronounced medically fit before the marriage is allowed to take place. It is a curious custom this intermarriage of convicts, but on the whole a good one, and pans out well in practice, many of them with their families preferring to live and die on the island in preference to going back to India. The actual ceremony, which takes place before the Chief Commissioner at the Residency, is, of course, purely of a formal character, but frequently it has its amusing side. But the real comic side of the picture occurs when the eligible males are taken over to the female prison to select their eligible mates. Unfor-

tunately I never had the opportunity of witnessing this truly rural love-scene.

Our Chief and our skipper were the best of friends, and we found that he made many more trips with us than when on our previous visit. They were all very pleasant voyages, and on our return from one of them everybody on board was delighted to find that the three new temporary officers, consisting of myself, Puttock, and Eldridge, had been confirmed in our respective appointments as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd officers of the Indian Marine. The confirmation had been granted with retrospective effect, and as a consequence I was entitled to draw about one thousand rupees back pay in the shape of executive and command allowance while acting in command of the *Nancowry*. Such a windfall had to be celebrated, and it was in the shape of a dinner on board to all my chums in the Station. This news came by one mail. By the next, a month afterwards, we received the "order of the boot," with the further curt intimation that any pay or allowances drawn on the previous order were to be immediately refunded.

The truth was H.E. the Viceroy had given us the temporary appointments, and on receiving satisfactory reports as to our fitness for the posts had, as promised, confirmed us in the service. But he had unfortunately exceeded his authority, as the confirmation required the sanction of the Secretary of State which had not been obtained, and so this important Government official had cabled out cancelling the appointments. The patronage of a Secretary of State was of far greater importance to that worthy official than the lives and prospects of three

promising young officers, whose only fault had been to rely upon the conscience of the Government for confirmation in the service which they had only entered at that Government's invitation. There was nothing for it, however, but to bow to the inevitable and accept our dismissal. At the same time, I shall never cease kicking myself for being such an inconceivable idiot as to comply with the order to refund the money already drawn. I was young and inexperienced in those days and it was a silly thing to do. But after all it only adds to the meanness and pettiness of those responsible for our dismissal. It was then that our dear old friend Colonel Cadell came to our assistance. He advised us to petition H.E. the Viceroy and helped us to draw up our petitions.

The war in Burma had just broken out, and hearing that there was a scarcity of officers for the Police, I went definitely for a post as Assistant Superintendent of Police in that country. I was fortunate enough to have at the time in the Government of India, as Secretary in the Home Department, a good friend in the person of Mr. A. P. MacDonnell, I.C.S., and when my petition came before him he was able to put in a word for me, and I obtained the appointment. Puttock was also fortunate in obtaining the post of Agent of Government Consignments in Calcutta, while Eldridge was offered and accepted an appointment in the Imperial Customs of China ; so that eventually we all did better for ourselves by leaving than we should have done by remaining in the service. And for this result we have to thank three men, viz. Colonel Tom Cadell, V.C., Mr. A. P. MacDonnell

—now Lord MacDonnell, P.C., G.C.S.I., and H.E. the late Lord Dufferin, Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

But for the time being, when I left the Andaman Islands, I was for the second time in my life—through no fault of my own—stranded, without a billet and without a “bob.”



T. Eldridge

A NIBOBARESE CANOE AT NANCOWRY

Photo. by E. H. Mann, Esq., C.I.E.



PART II
BURMA

CHAPTER IX

Appointed Assistant District Superintendent of Police in Burma and posted to the Kyaukse District, Upper Burma—My first dacoit hunt—Burmese tortures

ON reporting myself at the headquarters of the Government at Rangoon, I found that I was posted to the Kyaukse District in Upper Burma, and as my orders were to proceed there without delay, I lost no time in making final preparations for my new life. The journey up the Irrawaddy was most fascinating, but as we stopped at the various halting-places on the way, as well as on several sand-banks, it was not until the evening of the fifth day that I reached Mandalay.

Upper Burma, it will be remembered, was invaded and annexed in the year 1885. The work hardly occupied a month, and the expedition up the river under Sir Harry Prendergast has often since been referred to as the "River Picnic." Beyond the storming of the Minhla forts, where the resistance was feeble in the extreme, there was no actual fighting. Nor was there any attempt to resist the flotilla by blocking the waterway. King Theebaw had announced that at the proper moment he would drive the foreign barbarians into the sea whence they had come, but before he knew where he was these same barbarians were before Ava and His Majesty was "on the knee." On the 29th of November, Mandalay was

occupied, and the king a prisoner on his way down the river to Rangoon. But his army had already dispersed all over the country, carrying their arms with them, and, as to a loosely organised nation like the Burmese the occupation of their capital and the removal of their king meant nothing, it was clear that there was trouble ahead. And so it proved to be, and a great deal more than was ever anticipated. It took nearly five years to subdue the country, and in that time, I think I am not far wrong in stating, we had about 20,000 troops of all arms, together with a similar number of Military Police, constantly employed. It was nearly two years after the River Expedition that I arrived at Mandalay, and it was soon made clear to me that the whole country was still greatly perturbed; not so much by actual warfare as by small but numerous bands of armed brigands constantly attacking and looting the villages. These men were termed "dacoits," an Indian term, and their leaders or *bohs* were anything from near relations of the late king to mere highway robbers and murderers. They were here to-day and gone to-morrow, and covered up their tracks by the most barbarous system of cruelty and torture, which effectually prevented any of their victims from giving them away. How I wish now that I had kept a diary of my doings from this date on. My memory was never my strong point, and it is difficult to remember essential details necessary to chronicle events in their proper order. I know, for instance, that I left Mandalay and reached Kyaukse, but the route I took, or how long it took me to get there, is beyond recall. All I do know is that I had to wait some days for an

armed escort, without which no European was allowed to travel, and that I eventually found myself at my new home.

Kyaukse, the headquarters of the District of the same name, was at that time a large stockaded village of about 3000 inhabitants, excluding a Military Police battalion about a thousand strong, and other foreigners from India.

In charge of the District was Major Parrott, the Deputy-Commissioner, assisted by Captain Wilson, an Assistant Commissioner, and a number of Burman and other civil officials. The rest of the European community consisted of the Commandant, and Assistant Commandant of the Military Police battalion, the District Superintendent of Police, and Assistant Superintendent, two or three Inspectors, and the Civil Surgeon. My joining increased the list by the addition of a second Assistant Superintendent of Police.

The life was, of course, entirely new to me, but a sailor is quick to adapt himself to circumstances, and before very long I began to imagine that I had never been to sea. Our Deputy-Commissioner, Major Parrott—one of the very best—was married to a Burmese lady, and a very charming little lady we all found her. They were most hospitable, constantly having us to dine with them, and in the evenings our one relaxation was an apology for a tennis court outside their bungalow, where we used to meet to play the ubiquitous game. But I was not left long at headquarters to learn things. The times were too stirring for that, and I don't think I was at Kyaukse in all ten days before being sent off with an armed force on my first dacoity. The *modus operandi*

of these gangs was as follows, and when I describe one I describe all. They would select a village, swoop down on it in the middle of the night, and surround it. The *boh* or leader of the gang would then, with a few select bandits, enter it and seize the women-folk. The old women were tortured to force them to reveal the whereabouts of the valuables, while the younger ones were generally outraged and frequently slaughtered, or taken away as concubines. In fact, there were no bounds to their cruelty, and I could mention experiences of my own which would not be considered credible or possible, but will content myself with quoting a few examples by way of illustration, which are authentic, and which have been taken from Sir Charles Crosthwaite's book on the *Pacification of Burma*.

(1) "The old women gave up all their money and their ornaments, but nevertheless they were tied up, a bamboo mat with a hole cut to allow the head to pass through was put over them, and two or three of the gang held lighted torches to their backs and between their legs. The villagers were too afraid to yield any assistance. The women fainted, and the dacoits left them lying on the ground."

(2) "I have known of several cases in which women have been regularly trussed and suspended over a fire by dacoits till they gave up their money and other valuables."

(3) "I can recall one case in which dacoits pushed wood shavings up between a woman's legs and set fire to them."

(4) "In several cases of this kind that have occurred



DACOIT SYSTEM OF CRUCIFIXION IN BURMA



within my own knowledge the unfortunate women have died."

(5) "An Indian washerman belonging, if I remember right, to the Rifle Brigade, strayed from a column on the march. He was captured, and kept alive by having pieces cut off his thigh morning and evening, which were given to him to eat. The flesh was fried. This was done for three days, and then he was killed. I saw all this with my own eyes."

In fact, their methods were the *methods of barbarism*, and whenever any of our men or followers were captured, they were invariably killed under the most distressing circumstances, and either impaled or crucified. This latter torture, which I have myself seen, was always of the same horrible character. Two crossed bamboos in the shape of an X, with the hands tied to the upper arms and the feet to the lower, and the bodies mutilated in the most disgusting fashion.

The dacoity which I was sent out to investigate—all the other officers being away on similar duty—occurred about forty miles off. Not knowing a word of the language or anything about the work, off I went with an interpreter, a few Burman Civil Police, and twenty Military Police, under a *havildar* or corporal. I felt no end important; but when we reached the village, it was found the dacoity had been committed four days ago! What possible use was it to try and trace dacoits with a four days' start? And yet so great was the fear inspired, that the wretched villagers dared not make a report until they were well away. We found the usual traces of black-

guardism, but, needless to say, saw nothing of the dacoits. And this is only typical of hundreds of other cases. In fact, it frequently happened that when one got hot on the scent of a recent outrage, and in the act of inquiring about it on the spot, the harmless villager who was giving you all the information, and who volunteered to guide you on to the tracks of the dacoits, was a dacoit himself, left for the express purpose of taking you in the opposite direction ! Was it any wonder, then, that our efforts were not always attended with success ? I was myself employed for almost a year on this dacoit hunting, and, with one exception, never came across a gang. And the weary chases we had ! There were no tents and practically no impedimenta, as what few stores we had were carried either by transport ponies or coolies, and we slept on the ground wherever we happened to halt. But when it is borne in mind that every obstacle was placed in our way, and that a band of dacoits would after a successful coup immediately separate and scatter, only to meet again for another, perhaps a hundred miles away, it will be seen that we were always heavily handicapped in our efforts. At the same time, no dacoity was ever reported which was not immediately taken in hand, and gradually the Burmans began to see that the Government in the end must win. They gained confidence, and the frequent armed expeditions so harassed the dacoits that they came to see the game was not worth the candle. Many of the *bohs* and their followers throughout the country were killed, others captured and hung, and the rest so driven from pillar to post that they finally resumed their original occupation of peaceable citizens and agriculturists.

CHAPTER X

Gazetted to the Military Police—Pelly's splendid capture—A good bag of dacoit heads—Snipe shooting in Burma—Burmese fever—Happy days!

SHORTLY after this last exploit I was gazetted to the Military Police battalion for drill and training, and for the time gave up all Civil Police work. Later on, when the second-in-command fell ill, and had to take leave, I found myself acting in that capacity. One morning, when we were drilling on the parade ground, a mounted orderly came galloping up with an urgent message from the Deputy-Commissioner to Pelly, informing him that heavy firing was reported close to the NE. stockade of the village, and directing him to at once take out a force of mounted men and try and effect a capture. Pelly, who at the time happened to be drilling the mounted infantry—for in every battalion ten per cent. of the men were mounted—immediately wheeled the whole body off the parade ground, and calling up Daniell, his assistant, went off at a hand-gallop in the direction mentioned. I was disappointed at the time at his not giving me a chance, but it didn't last long. At about midday, just as we had finished *hazri* or late breakfast, we heard the troopers clattering back through the village. Pelly and Daniell came in and sat down, but they were not communicative. Subsequently we ascertained that on nearing the firing line Pelly, taking every precaution with a view to

securing a good bag, had extended his men into a half circle, and then giving the word to charge, had charged, only to capture General Wolseley and a party of officers from Mandalay out snipe shooting !!

With Kyaukse as the headquarters of the battalion, we had a chain of small fortified posts, holding from ten to twenty men each, all round the District, and one of our duties was to be constantly riding round inspecting these posts with a view to assuring that any dacoity reported was immediately investigated. As we drew Rs. 1 per mile as travelling allowance for every mile travelled, when the distance exceeded twenty in a day, it may be taken for granted that our posts were well inspected. In many cases, however, this T.A. hunting, as it was called, was terribly overdone, and I have known of cases where men sent in bills for Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 a month, in addition to their pay. As usual, it ended in killing the golden goose, and shortly after I left Burma the only consequence possible followed, viz. the reduction in the amount of the allowance, and the issue of stricter rules for its observance.

In those days all the chief *bohs* had prices on their heads, ranging from Rs. 500 up to Rs. 3000, according to their importance. When engaged playing tennis one evening at Major Parrott's bungalow, some sowars of the Hyderabad contingent galloped up, and with joy depicted in their faces dismounted, and saluting the Major, asked him to kindly identify some heads ! All Burmans have long hair, and one sowar alone had five heads hanging by the hair to his saddle. A more gruesome and ghastly sight than this line of decapitated heads lying on the



Photo. by Signor Beato

POLICE AT WORK IN BURMA, SHOWING CAPTURED DACOITS



tennis court for inspection I don't ever remember seeing even in Burma. None of them were, as a matter of fact, men of any importance, but these sportsmen were not going to run any risk of losing a reward once they had secured the scalps !

Gradually things became more peaceful and quiet, and we were eventually able to indulge in a pastime we had all been longing for, viz. snipe shooting. I don't suppose there is a finer snipe ground in the world than Burma. The whole country for miles around Kyaukse was one vast rice or *paddy* land of the richest description. So rich, in fact, that three crops are taken off it in the year, with the result that standing on rising ground, you could see the unique sight of land being simultaneously (1) prepared for rice, (2) sown with rice, (3) rice being transplanted, and (4) being harvested. The Rangoon-Mandalay Railway was then in course of construction, with Kyaukse as one of its main stations. On a Sunday we used to borrow a trolley from the engineers in charge, load it up with lunch, guns, and cartridges, and just run it along the line, selecting our fields. To a good shot fifty to sixty couple was an ordinary bag, and I believe the record bag to one gun in these parts was, when I left Burma, one hundred and four couple ; and it may have been exceeded since.

The one great drawback to living in a swamp was malarial fever, and saturated as I was with Nicobar fever, it goes without saying that I had more than my fair share of it. For the first three months in Kyaukse I lived with another fellow in an ordinary hut in the middle of the bazaar. Built on piles, these huts consist of but one

room, with a sort of washing platform outside by way of a verandah, and a flooring which consists of a number of young male bamboos tied together. Frequently we were both down for days together with fever at the same time. There were no beds, simply bedding on the floor, and in a way this was convenient, for Burma fever being always accompanied by sickness, all one had to do was to pull open a few bamboos, and the chickens and the pigs waiting below did the rest. Happy days !

CHAPTER XI

A trip to Fort Stedman in the Shan States—Time and distance as measured by Burmans and Shans—Strange meeting in the Shan hills—A meal off diseased meat—Shan system of paddling their canoes—Lavish hospitality of the Rifle Brigade at Fort Stedman—We take over charge of the prisoner—The return march with the Setkya Mintha—His ingenuity beats us—Arrive back at Kyaukse

THE serenity of our lives was suddenly disturbed one day by the Deputy-Commissioner getting a “clear the line telegram” from the Government, informing him that the Setkya Mintha, a near relation of the late King Theebaw, had been captured by the Rifle Brigade at Fort Stedman in the Shan States, and ordering him to despatch a strong detachment under two “thoroughly reliable and trustworthy British officers” to bring the prince into Kyaukse. I put the above words in inverted commas because I was one of the officers chosen! Pelly, the Commandant of the battalion, as a matter of course went in command, and as all the other officers were away on various duties, I was selected!

Now the Setkya Mintha was a very big prize, and our battalion was chosen to bring him in, for the simple reason that in his last campaign he had succeeded in ambuscading a large force consisting of the Mandalay and Kyaukse battalions, and inflicting heavy loss on them. He was also by way of being a “holy man,” and it was feared that in the march down from the Shan States

an effort would be made to attempt a rescue: hence a strong force for escort duty.

A trip to the Shan States was something quite out of the common, and although we had no idea how to get there, or how long the journey would take, Pelly lost no time in getting together his stores and transport, and on the following day, with a hundred selected men from the battalion, we were ready for the road. We got away about 10.30 in the morning, with the final benediction of the Deputy-Commissioner to "bring the scoundrel in dead or alive." The march was along the new railway line as far as Meiktila, and from there, as far as we could ascertain, the route lay quite outside the reach of any villages. Then, as later in the Boer War, the Government failed to supply their troops with any reliable maps, and once the hills were reached, we had literally to smell our way along as best we could. Fort Stedman was, according to the map, approximately one hundred and fifty miles distant from the railway, but as there was no proper road, and for a considerable distance the marching would be in the hills, it was not safe to reckon upon making more than about twelve miles a day. Until we got into the hills the daily march was uninteresting and without incident, but once amongst them, the scenery was very beautiful, and the change in altitude had an exhilarating effect on us all. But here, as elsewhere in Burma, we found the inhabitants utterly devoid of the sense of distance; and their ignorance was exasperating. If weary and footsore, engaged in a long and fruitless hunt after a gang of dacoits in Burma, you stopped to ask a man the distance to the nearest village, he would probably tell

you it was "five cocks' crows off," or possibly "two gunshot lengths off." And if, in despair, you demanded to know how long it would take to reach the village, he would set your mind completely at rest by informing you that it would "take you as long as it would take to grind a certain measure of wheat, or single-handed cut down a small patch of full-grown paddy"! You could know absolutely nothing about the alternative, and for the "cock's crow," the only thing to do was to imagine how far one could hear a cock crow, and then multiply the distance by five! And so it was with the Shans, only more so.

On the ninth day out, finding we had a long march of anything from twenty to thirty miles to make, with water only available at one halting-place, Pelly ordered an early start. Reveille was sounded at 4.15 and we set out shortly before 5 o'clock. We reached the halting-place about midday, only to our surprise to find it occupied by a detachment of the Rifle Brigade on their way to Mandalay. But they were most hospitable. The two officers in charge, who were just sitting down to their breakfast, came out and asked us to join them, and dismissing our men we very readily consented. The smell of their cheer was appetising, as, travelling light, we had eaten no fresh meat since leaving Kyaukse. And here a curious thing happened. We sat down the four of us in a small tent at a little camp-table. Captain A—— commanding the detachment sat opposite Pelly, and the other officer, whose name I did not catch on introduction, opposite me. Our hosts were both extremely nice fellows and did us well, but the longer I sat and the

longer I looked at my *vis à-vis*, the more certain I became that I had met him somewhere before. But name him I could not. And what was still more curious was the fact that I felt him eyeing me as if I was no stranger to him. At last when breakfast was over, and we were having our smoke, he said, "And where have we two met before, and what is your name?" I gave it him, and then ascertained that he was the doctor in charge, and that the last time I had seen him was in the chemist's shop in our village at home, where he had served me as a boy with some dog poison!! We had a great laugh and chaff about old times, and a better or nicer fellow in every way it would be hard to find. But it was, all the same, a curious meeting brought about in a curious way. Who would have thought of coming across an old pal in the middle of the Shan States, and one whom I had not seen since a boy of twelve? At 2.30 both parties fell in, and with hearty handshakes parted, never—so far at least—to meet again.

The chief difficulty in camping in Burma and the Shan country is the impossibility of getting any fresh food. The inhabitants, who are chiefly Buddhists, take no life, and in the small bazaars one occasionally falls in with on the line of march the only things procurable are tinned Swiss milk, which both Burmans and Shans love, mixed biscuits, sardines, and jam, all very old and stale. Judge then of our joy, when three or four days after the above meeting, our Indian servant came running in to inform us that there was fresh beef on sale in the village bazaar. How we did both wait on that beef, and the smell of the cooking alone was worth a king's ransom!

We sat down to it and Pelly cut it, and I took the first mouthful. But no—I kept it there. I wasn't going to be the only one. Pelly had to taste it too, and then—oh, ye gods! I can taste it now. It was a carcase which had died of foot-and-mouth disease!! Strange, impossible, you say! Not a bit of it! Absolutely true. Buddhists will take no life, but they appear to be able to feast and thrive on any old dead thing they find lying around. Burmans have even been known to cut steaks from the dead transport elephants at Mandalay, and special precautions had afterwards to be taken to destroy and burn any Government commissariat animals dying of disease. At last, on our final morning march, our eyes rested on the beautiful Lake of Imle, on the eastern shores of which Fort Stedman is situated. It took us no time to embark in the ferry-boats awaiting us, and the trip on the water was a delightful change from the everlasting tramping over broken ground. The Shan method of paddling their boats is remarkable, and I must really try and see if I can explain it. Each boat had a crew of twenty with ten on either side, and a skipper in the stern steering. The men all stood up facing forward, and in making their stroke they stood on one leg and helped the paddle with the other. For instance, a man on the starboard, or right side, would stand on his left leg, and when his arms went forward with the paddle his right leg would move as if in the act of stepping, and with the sole of the right foot resting on the front blade of the paddle he would assist the arms in making the paddle propel the boat forward. The rowers kept perfect time to a sort of chant, and it was quite pretty work watching them.

Sitting there, chatting and smoking with Pelly, I remember as if it were yesterday that our entire conversation was confined to what we would eat and drink that night at mess. It reminded me of my old sailing-ship days when towards the end of a voyage nothing was ever mentioned but food. When, then, as we landed on the other side, and learnt that the Rifle Brigade were away in camp, our disappointment can be imagined. This was bad enough, but I am sorry to have to add that the hospitality of the regiment was not on a par with that of their detachment, for beyond leaving instructions regarding their prisoner, and informing us as to the whereabouts of the best drinking-water, they gave us no welcome—not even to the extent of offering us the use of their mess for replenishing our larder. We had money to pay for things, but, nothing being available in the local bazaar, we still continued to go to bed hungry. In fact, onions and *chapattis*, a sort of pancake made of flour, formed the only available food, and I really sometimes longed for a bite of the old despised salt junk of my seafaring days. To be quite correct, when going over the fort a mess-sergeant did offer to sell us provisions, but there being no authority to buy, we preferred to go without—though I verily believe we would both have given every penny in our possession to have had on that first night one good square meal, washed down, say, with a couple of bottles of beer !

I only hope that the letter of thanks Pelly left for the regiment duly reached them on their return to Fort Stedman.

After halting for the inside of a week to rest the men,

a day was fixed for the return journey, and the evening before intimation was sent to the Military that we would take over the prisoner. For the purpose, Pelly and I with a havildar's guard went to the lock-up, and after stripping him and making a careful search all over his body, we reclothed him, gave our receipt, and took him in charge. He was a poor-looking creature at best, with a cataract in one eye, and anything less *royal* I have never seen. But he *was royal* and an important prisoner of war, so it behoved us to take every precaution in our power to safeguard him from himself as well as from outside interference. He had already given out that he was not going to allow himself to be killed by the foreign devils, and that before suffering any such indignity he would put an end to his life. Assuming from this that poison might be a means to an end, we were especially careful to keep an eye open for anything of the sort when making our search of his person and clothing. Nothing however was found, and this, in the light of after events, was the excuse for a good deal of chaff from our brother officers.

Bearing in mind the parting instructions given to us by Major Parrott, Pelly decided to leave nothing to chance, and his orders to me were definite and clear. The prisoner was never on any account to be relieved of his handcuffs or leg irons. He was to travel in the middle of the detachment immediately between Pelly and myself, *and he was to be taken home dead or alive*. For night watch, or when halting, we were to take turn and turn about guarding him, always with a loaded revolver at our side, and at the first sign of a night attack he was to

have a bullet through his brain. One day's journey was however, sufficient to prove that the royal personage was unable to march in leg-irons, and, as he was suffering from swollen feet as well as swollen head, it was decided to relieve him of these, and to give him the use of one of our transport ponies to ride. Fortunately for us, in spite of frequent and daily requests to have his hands released, Pelly was adamant, and to all such appeals gave a direct negative.

Eventually after an anxious but uninteresting journey the Setkya Mintha with his escort reached the railway line, and finding the day after our arrival that a construction train would be leaving that day for Kyaukse, the commanding officer commandeered the requisite number of trucks and entrained his entire party. The whole of Kyaukse turned up at the station to meet the "royal prisoner," and right glad were we to hand him over safe and sound and be relieved of all further worry and responsibility. But there was a surprise in store for us. After dinner that night the Civil Surgeon, who was also *ex officio* Superintendent of the jail, casually asked us whether before taking over charge of such an important prisoner as the Setkya Mintha, with a death sentence already on his head, any examination had been made of his person. He then produced and threw on the table for our edification what the jail authorities had discovered and what we must have overlooked. It was nothing less than a beautiful little dagger of sharp steel, about four and a half inches long, which had been carefully concealed in the top-knot of hair which all Burmans wear on the top of their heads! Naturally enough we

were frequently reminded of this fact, especially if we ever attempted to buck about our exploits in the Shan Hills. In extenuation, however, it must be added that the weapon had been very cleverly concealed by being plaited all over with hair of exactly the same colour as the head in which it was hidden.

CHAPTER XII

The execution of the Setkya Mintha—I command the hanging parade—Appointed Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Burma—My first effort at entertaining at Government House, and what we had to do it with—Am confirmed in my new appointment

AFTER a short trial, for no long one was necessary, the Setkya Mintha was condemned to death, and the orders received from the Local Government, confirming the sentence, were that he was to have a public execution outside the Kyaukse jail walls. Every precaution was to be taken against a possible rescue, and the full force of the battalion was to attend the hanging parade, so as to be ready for any emergency. The execution was to take place sharp at seven one morning, and overnight Captain Pelly had issued all the necessary orders, and he was to be in personal command. Judge then of my horror when, just as I was mounting to ride to the lines to bring up the regiment, a *chit* was put into my hands telling me that my commanding officer was down with fever, and directing me to take command of the parade. I also was seedy with fever that morning, and I never received any order less to my liking. However, there was nothing for it and no time to lose. Sending word to the Subadar-major to march the regiment to the jail, I galloped off to the Deputy Commissioner to inform him of the change of plans, and then returned to take charge of what proved to be the most disagreeable task

I ever had in my life. The battalion was formed up in three sides of a square facing outwards, the fourth side being the jail wall with the gallows in the centre. Outside the square, and about one hundred paces in advance, was a cordon of skirmishers, and outside them again, and distant perhaps a quarter of a mile, were to be seen some thousands of Burmans gathered together from all parts of the country, who had been patiently waiting throughout the night to see the last of their hero.

Riding into the square I took up my position just below the gallows. The Setkya Mintha was then brought out from the jail and conducted to the platform, where as usual he was asked if he had anything to say or request to make. His last and only request on this earth was for a smoke, which he was given. Now it must be remembered that Burmans were allowed to carry on their persons their *dahs* or native swords, and the danger facing me was that this huge crowd might, when the fatal moment arrived, be carried away by their fanatic zeal for their holy prince and attempt a rush and a rescue. My orders were clear on the point, and every man had been served out with twenty rounds of ball cartridge. I could see nothing of what was going on behind me, my eyes being glued on the crowd, but when the smoke was over and the Superintendent informed me that they were ready for the actual execution, I called the battalion to attention, fixed bayonets, and then very deliberately gave the order to load. The noose was adjusted and the bolt drawn, and as the body fell the whole crowd in front of me rose to their feet, giving out a loud wail of despair. For a moment when I saw the arms of these people raised

I was in doubt as to their intention, but fortunately it was only momentary, for no sooner were they up than they were down again, resuming their former occupation of just waiting and watching. Hearing nothing behind me, I was congratulating myself that the hideous task was at last at an end, when suddenly to my horror the poor thing hanging there started gurgling and wriggling in the air. These moments of suspense were too awful for words and the temptation to end it all with a bullet from my revolver was almost too strong to resist. But I dared not, and the end came as the end must mercifully come to all things. The Burmans, to my surprise, went slowly and, as it were, reverently away. No sooner had they disappeared than, leaving the Subadar-major to take the regiment back to barracks, I rode straight home and to bed. I was ill in bed with high fever for over a fortnight, and many a night in my dreams did I see that poor wretched figure repeating his last weird step-dance in the air ! R.I.P.

My next surprise was the receipt of the following telegram which was one morning put into my hands by Major Parrott :

“ You are appointed to officiate as Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner, and you are directed to proceed without delay to Rangoon, reporting yourself on arrival to the Chief Secretary.”

Eh, what ?

“ Do I sleep ? do I dream ?
Do I wonder and doubt ?
Are things what they seem ?
Or is visions about ? ”

I was aware that Sir Charles Crosthwaite had applied

for leave, and that my very good friend Mr. A. P. MacDonnell, to whom allusion has already been made, had been appointed to officiate for him, but little did I dream that he would call upon me to be his staff officer! It was a great honour and one not to be refused, though when I got into the train for Rangoon I could not help wondering whether it would not be advisable to take a return ticket! However, after bidding good-bye with great regret to all my good Kyaukse friends, where I had spent a very happy time, in I got and off I went.

In due course I received my Chief Commissioner at the wharf at Rangoon, and from that day took over my duties as Personal Assistant. It was another and entirely new phase of life to me, and one of absorbing interest. The whole of the Chief Commissioner's office came to him through me, and for the first time in my life I was able to appreciate what a wonderful thing the Government of a country, especially a new country, really is. For not only was there the routine administration of the old province to deal with, but the Chief had at this time the recently acquired territory of Upper Burma, which, inclusive of the Shan States and Chin Hills, contained an additional area of no less than one hundred and sixty thousand square miles to lick into shape. And when it is remembered that the entire population of this new province was more or less on the war-path, that all the industries and to a great extent the agricultural operations, on which the very food of the people depended, were at a standstill, it will readily be seen that it was a time of very great anxiety to the Head of that Government. Personally, I cannot conceive a more onerous, respon-

sible, or thankless task than taking over the charge of affairs of such a country at such a time, and for so short a period.

In my position as Personal Assistant I had, in addition to my duties as Private Secretary, those of an A.D.C., and had accordingly to run the house and look after all social functions. My previous training was not perhaps the best to fit me for this sort of thing, but as I have said before, a sailor can generally adapt himself to circumstances. The governor of a province has naturally a great deal of official entertaining to do, and one would imagine that when a paternal Government presented him with a house and furniture, it would see that he had everything pertaining to it, to enable him to do his duty in that respect. It came, therefore, as a bit of surprise to me to find that whenever we gave a dinner party of anything over ten people, I had to send round to neighbouring friends to borrow plate, cutlery, china, and table linen ! It was, to say the least, rather *infra dig.* for Government House !! And when, with the prospect of the approaching visit of H.R.H. Prince Albert Victor to Rangoon, which would entail a vast amount of entertaining, I represented the state of affairs to my Chief, he took the matter in hand with his usual thoroughness. He directed me to make out a list of things I thought necessary, and to wire the order to Calcutta. The telegram alone cost over £20 ; but it was the only thing to do, and the various Chiefs of Government House coming after him have had reason to be thankful for the visit of His Royal Highness.

The all too short three months of my staff appointment were now drawing to a close, and I began to regret

with a deep regret that, on the return of Sir Charles Crosthwaite, I should have to hand over to another the duties which I was only just beginning to thoroughly appreciate. But yet another surprise was in store for me. For one of the first things Sir Charles did on his return was to offer me the permanent appointment of Personal Assistant on his staff ! Needless to say I jumped at it, and I am proud to add that I remained with him as his personal staff officer until he left Burma. Strangely enough we both left Burma within a few months of each other, and both through a complete breakdown in health. From the time I was first appointed as personal assistant to Mr. A. P. MacDonnell I have never looked back, and let me say right here, that any success I may have attained in life is due entirely to these two men—viz. the present Lord MacDonnell, P.C., G.C.S.I., and Sir Charles Crosthwaite, K.C.S.I. ; two of the ablest administrators that England has ever sent to the East.

CHAPTER XIII

Rangoon and its social side—A big-wig from the North of England—
—The pest of the green bug—How it cleared a ballroom quicker
than an alarm of fire—Upper Burma—The Burmese as a race—
The Burmese *Pwe*—Their national dress—Their women-folk

TO anyone wanting a place in the sun, I would recommend Burma. Rangoon, and, in fact, the whole of Lower Burma, has, it must be admitted, a villainous climate; and the wags will tell you—and tell you truly—that the cold weather in Rangoon commences punctually on the 31st December, and ends as promptly on the 1st January. It is also a regrettable fact that the punkah in Rangoon never ceases from one year's end to the other. At the same time the place has its compensating advantages. Socially it is, in spite of the heat, a most festive place, and it has admittedly the finest and best managed *gymkhana* in the East. For quite a small subscription you get polo, cricket, racquets, tennis, and golf, and in addition to the regular monthly dance given at the *gymkhana*, there is dancing twice a week in the evening from 6 to 7.30. During my service in the East I was never in a place where people hung better together, and what with dinners, dances, moonlight picnics to the Kokine lakes and various other entertainments, one could never be dull. As Personal Assistant my emoluments were not large, and I lived chiefly on the interest of what I owed ;

but I know I managed to maintain a nice little stud of polo ponies, drove one of the smartest tandems in the place, and, in fact, did everything there was to do, and did it quite well, thank you. Two incidents of our life at Rangoon come back to me, both of which I feel I must tell. The Viceroy had written informing us that he was sending a certain gentleman from the North of England to us who might be of use in developing the country, and requesting us to look after him. He was, of course, made a guest at Government House, and we entertained him during his stay at Rangoon. He was quite a delightful individual of the rough-and-ready school, but hardly *au fait* with the *convenances* of polite society. One exceedingly hot evening—and it certainly was one of the muggiest I can ever remember experiencing at Rangoon—we had a large dinner party for him. There was not a breath of wind, and the punkah only stirred hot air. Our guest was getting more and more uncomfortable. He was perspiring freely, and in colour a sort of mottled green. At last, to his intense relief, the ladies made a move. Directly they were out of the room, and before we resumed our seats, he seized his finger-bowl, and pouring the contents of it down the inside of his shirt-collar remarked, “By goom it’s ’ot.” On another occasion, and on a similar sort of night, we were giving a ball at Government House, when suddenly the ballroom was invaded by a swarm of what is known in the East as the green bug. Had they settled on the ground dancing might have continued, but unfortunately for all concerned they elected to settle in the ladies’ hair, and so great is the stench of these putrid little insects, that within a quarter of an hour of

their arrival there was not a soul to be found in the house. Everyone had fled !

In Upper Burma there are none of these drawbacks. It is never so hot, and you have a distinct cold weather. Had it not been for the illness which I contracted, I would have asked for nothing better than to complete the rest of my service in the "Shiny" in Upper Burma. For, you see, the people themselves are such a fascinating people. Unlike the native of India, a Burman can laugh and enjoy a joke. I have seen a native of India smile. I have never seen one laugh. Whereas, the whole idea of the Burmese, as a race, would appear to be to enjoy themselves and make the best of a short life, and try and make it a happy one. The men are sportsmen, and if they are lucky enough to make money, they spend it. Their chief amusements are horse, or rather pony racing, cock-fighting, and gambling ; and they will back their fancy with their last penny. On the other hand, they are lazy and indolent, and as soldiers or policemen utterly unreliable. Brave individually, and fearless of death, I don't think I can remember any occasion when they distinguished themselves on our side ; but this, of course, may be due to the fact that they were pitted against their own people. Let us hope so. That they can bear severe pain without flinching I can certify to. Finding a guide on one occasion deliberately taking us on a false scent, we tied him up, and two powerful Pathans set about him and almost took the hide off him. Not a sound escaped him, and when released he got up and walked away without a word. Poor devil ! We felt the pain almost as much as he did. That they are useless as policemen, and know not the meaning of the



Photo. by Signor Beato

A BURMESE "K'NUT," SHOWING TATTOOED LEGS



word discipline, I can also vouch for. I was once hot on the track of a dacoity, and in order to get assistance from a Military Police Post, found it necessary to drop down the river during the night in a boat. As both banks of the river were infested with dacoits, I gave orders that two out of my eight Burmese constables were to do sentry-go, one at either end of the boat, first with a view to protection, and secondly, to keep the crew at work during the night. On waking up for the third time, only to find every soul in the boat asleep, I fired my revolver twice into the water, to frighten them into their duty if possible. Within a flash I was the sole occupant of the boat! Two constables forward had fallen overboard from sheer fright, and the others—rowers included—scared out of their seven senses, had immediately followed suit; and I was left all alone to paddle my own canoe!

Again, unlike the Indian, their women are as free as the air, and such a thing as *purdah* is unknown. The morals of the Burmese are lax, from the fact that in the Buddhist religion there is no religious marriage ceremony. Marriage is merely a contract, easily entered into and as easily broken; but on the credit side of the page must be entered the fact that in no country in the world are there so few divorces. To see a crowd of Burmese on some holiday festival is one of the prettiest sights imaginable. They invariably end up the evening with what they call the *Pwe*, which is, in fact, their travelling theatre. There is neither scenery nor accessories. The strolling players simply pitch upon a piece of ground, and marking out a large circle similar to our circus, commence operations, and they continue without ceasing sometimes for days

and nights together ; the while the audience, consisting of men, women, and children, all smoking, camp where they squat and see it to a finish. The language used on these occasions is a language of its own, and even some of our best Burmese scholars have to admit that they don't understand it. But from the roars of laughter that it evokes the dialogue must be amusing, and most of it, I am informed, would not pass our censor. I remember on one occasion, while on tour with Sir Charles Crosthwaite, attending one of these *Pwes*. In one portion of it the byplay between some men and women caused much amusement, and Sir Charles, to show his appreciation of the acting, directed his interpreter to ask for an encore, Either his request, or the motive for it, was misunderstood. and when the actors reappeared on the scene, the acting was so grossly indecent that we had to beat a hasty retreat. The Burmese dress, both in the case of men and women, is the prettiest in the world, and on gala days consists of nothing but silk. The men wear a silk handkerchief in the hair, a short white coat, and the *lungi*. The women, flowers in the hair—which is always beautifully done—a white coat somewhat similar to the men, and the *tamain*. A peculiar feature of the *tamain* is that it is so adjusted as to show the whole of the inside of the right leg when in the act of walking, and yet it is not in the least indecent. I sometimes wonder whether the present-day fashion of their Western sisters in the shape of the slit skirt is not in imitation of the *tamain*. If it is we may expect further developments, for they are not half sufficiently advanced yet, although the imitation so far is, in my humble opinion, not only indecent but ugly. The

origin of this form of dress, and the tattooing of the men's legs which obtains throughout Burma, is peculiar. In the dim ages, it is said, that a certain Burmese king, finding his population was not increasing as he should like, set about to devise some mode of dress which should have the effect of making the sexes mutually more attractive to each other. As a result of his deliberations he issued an edict, directing all his males above a certain age to have their legs tattooed from above the knees to the waist, and, in order to expose this delicate tracery, the *lungi* was to be worn tucked up round the waist. The only alteration for the women was the one already referred to, which adjusted the *tamain* so as to expose the leg. It no doubt sounds shocking, but as a matter of fact there is nothing shocking about it, and any English lady who has been in Burma will bear me out in this statement. The Burmese as a race, both men and women, are extremely charitable and generous, and if proof of this were needed, one would only have to look round the countryside to see it. Pagodas, monasteries, and rest-houses, all the free gifts of the people, are to be found here, there, and everywhere ; some of the former erected on almost inaccessible heights, and at very great expense ; while in the monasteries there is to be found the finest teak carving in the world. And talking about pagodas reminds me of the curious origin of the small pagoda universally known as the *Bub* pagoda. I won't vouch for the truth of it, but it is commonly believed that a certain Burmese queen, being dissatisfied with some designs placed before her by the royal architects, uncovering her bosom and taking hold of one of her breasts said, " This is the prettiest shape in nature,

build on it." And certainly the result leaves nothing to the imagination.

But lest it should be thought from what I have written that the Burmese damsel is nothing but a pretty doll, only to be dressed up and looked at, let me say at once that they are nothing of the sort. In the first place, they cannot be termed even pretty from our European standpoint, as there is too much of the Mongolian type of countenance about them. Rather you would call them dainty and fascinating. But apart from this, they are extremely useful members of society, doing in their different spheres of life a large part of the work of the country. In fact, they do more than the men. Among the lower classes it is the women who do all the lighter field work, such as the sowing, transplanting, and reaping of the paddy. In the middle classes, it is the woman who weaves the beautiful Burmese silks, and it is the woman who manufactures the celebrated Burman cheroot, which if it isn't to be seen in her hair or her ear, will most certainly be found in her mouth; for all Burmese women, high and low, are inveterate smokers. Then, again, the women throughout Upper and Lower Burma are the retail traders of the country; and go to any bazaar you like, it is the women who conduct the business. In the upper classes, the lady of the house, as in Europe, is the mistress and the manageress of the household, keeps the household accounts, and controls the servants. Burmese servants are notoriously lazy and indolent, and never hesitate to leave their service at a moment's notice, so long as it suits them to do so. And it is only their own women-folk who appear to have any authority over



Photo. by Signor Beato

A BURMESE BELLE, SHOWING DIVIDED SKIRT



them. It is, I suppose, a case of *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*; but to whatever cause it may be due, it was so self-evident in my day that most of the Europeans in the country found it necessary to instal a Burmese lady housekeeper in their establishments. In fact, so indispensable did this little lady make herself that even the giddy bachelor, if he wanted peace and harmony in his household, had to put up with her presence. She lived in a little hut of her own in the compound, kept the house accounts, did the marketing, and had sole control of the servants. And woe betide any servant who left her master's employ without her permission !

In a personal narrative of this sort, it is of course impossible to discuss these fascinating people or their country at length, but in case, from what has already been said, any one would care to learn more about them, let me recommend two excellent books on the subject. The one is *The Soul of a People* by Fielding—an old brother officer of mine in Burma—and the other, *The Pacification of Burma*, by Sir Charles Crosthwaite, K.C.S.I.

CHAPTER XIV

The visit of H.R.H. Prince Albert Victor to Burma—His triumphal reception—Visit to the elephants working timber in the Bombay-Burma Trading Company's yards—Trip by rail to Mandalay—Celebrated dinner party—By steamer down the Irrawaddy—Signor Beato and the photograph of His Royal Highness and escort—*I unintentionally personate His Royal Highness*

THE first thing we had to take in hand and arrange for was the approaching royal visit, and in a country such as ours was at the time, it was no light task. To mention a detail only, it may be noted that, as His Royal Highness was to travel from Rangoon to Mandalay by rail, the whole of the railway line—a distance of 330 miles—had to be closely guarded by troops. Sentries were posted on either side of the railway, with companies in reserve—strict orders being issued for the men to keep in the background and out of sight as much as possible; and it was amusing on the journey to see some big burly Sikh soldiers, bent on having a look at the royal train, and at the same time trying to hide themselves behind a telegraph post!

Rangoon, which perhaps for its size is the most cosmopolitan Eastern city in the world, set itself out to give the great Prince a right royal reception, and each sect of the population vied with the other in excelling in the magnificence of its triumphal arches. But if a prize could have been awarded, I certainly would have given

it to the Chinamen, whose beautiful arch was a perfect masterpiece, and cost many thousands of rupees to erect.

Four days were spent showing the royal visitors the sights of the town, the most interesting of which was, perhaps, the visit to the sawmills of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, where the Prince saw the most intelligent lot of elephants at work it is possible to conceive. In fact, they do say that the elephant on guard at the gate took our names down as we entered the compound ! The usual garden-parties and dinners in honour of His Royal Highness were given, and the social side of the festivities ended up with a magnificent ball in the Town Hall. But the feature of the visit from a spectacular point of view was undoubtedly the water fête given by the townspeople at the Kokine Lake. Burmans excel at all sorts of water sports and displays, and the procession of boats towing the royal barge across the lake to the pavilion specially erected for the Prince, was a sight not easily forgotten. There is no crowd in the world to compare to a Burmese holiday crowd. Men, women, and children are out to enjoy themselves, and dressed as they all are from top to toe in silk of the most exquisite variety of colours, the wonderful effect is more easily imagined than described. Sir Edward Bradford, who was in charge of the Prince's party, and who had travelled the wide world round, had to admit that he had never in his life seen such a gorgeous effect of colouring, or one so beautifully staged.

From Rangoon we travelled by special train to Mandalay, where the Prince again met with a great

reception. We had here a repetition of the festivities given at Rangoon. But what I am sure the Prince appreciated in the northern capital more than anything else was the greater freedom from restraint, and the snipe-shooting he was able to indulge in. As a man Prince Albert Victor was most charming, and made himself exceedingly popular with us all. Nothing annoyed him more than the pomp and ceremonial which, from his exalted position, he was bound to have around him. In fact, one of the first things he asked me in Rangoon was to have the guards and sentries about the grounds either dispensed with or reduced as far as possible. Give him his gun and let him shoot, and he asked for nothing better, and of the two days we had in his company at this game it was easy to see that he could hold his own both in walking and shooting with the very best. At the same time he sometimes asserted himself, and once very much to my confusion, and to that of all concerned. It was at our first and only dinner-party at Mandalay. The guests were assembled in the drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of His Royal Highness, when just before entering the room, he asked me which lady he was to take in to dinner. I pointed him out the lady, and to my dismay he said, "No, I won't take her in! I'll take this one," pointing to another!

Dinner was laid for forty, and the "Roast Beef of Old England" was actually being played by the band. Any attempt to rearrange the table only made confusion worse confounded, and how we eventually settled in our places, I for one don't know. It can well be imagined that the lady who was to have had the honour was not

S. W. Coxon Hon. A. Hay

—————

Capt. Edwards

Capt. Sir G. Holford



Sir Charles Crosswaite,

H.R.H.

Lord Claude Hamilton

Sir Edward Bradford

H.R.H. PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR AND STAFF



best pleased ; but as nobody could be blamed but the Prince, there was not much blame going around. And as he seemed immensely pleased with the result of his action, the rest of the guests soon followed suit, and took the whole thing as a huge joke. But this dinner-party had a funny sequel. We could not well afford to run the risk of another similar fiasco, and at the conference next morning the matter was discussed.

Sir Edward Bradford saw the difficulty we were in, and he seized on a half jocular remark of mine to solve it. I pointed out that wherever he went it always fell to the lot of His Royal Highness—who was then, I think, only about twenty-one years of age—to take in a lady old enough to be his grandmother, and added that, if I had my way, I would ask the two prettiest and youngest women in Mandalay, and plant one on either side of him. To my astonishment both Sir Edward and Sir Charles thought the idea an excellent one. Mandalay was entirely official in those days, and we could do it. At the next and only other dinner-party we gave there, His Royal Highness was seated between a subaltern's wife on the one side, and the wife of a D.S. Police on the other, and I think he enjoyed himself thoroughly. I know they did.

From Mandalay we went down the Irrawaddy to Rangoon in a vessel specially placed at the disposal of the Prince by the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. She was beautifully fitted up for the purpose, and as the commissariat was placed in the hands of Peliti & Co., the great Calcutta caterers, there was little to complain about in that direction. There was, however, just one little fly in the ointment, and that was the menu cards.

They were works of art, with pretty little photo-pictures of local riverside scenes, but utterly spoilt by each one having some asinine quotation from Shakespeare alluding to His Royal Highness. I remember one perfectly well, and it was typical of the rest. It is a quotation from Shakespeare's play of *Henry IV*, and reads, "A capon's leg and a flagon of sack for His Royal Highness." Some time afterwards, when lunching at a certain gentleman's house, it was amusing to notice on the sideboard an ordinary glass peg tumbler, such as is commonly used in India, mounted on a huge ebony pedestal, bearing an inscription on a silver plate to the following effect :

"This tumbler was the tumbler used by His Royal Highness Prince Albert Victor on his voyage down the Irrawaddy from Mandalay to Rangoon in the s.s. —."

There would appear to be some connection between this and the menu cards.

Before bidding the Prince good-bye, I feel I must record one other amusing incident. At Mandalay we had a Signor Beato, who combined the business of a photographer with that of a seller of Burmese curios, in the shape of silks, silver, wood-carving, &c. But Signor Beato was more than this. He was one of the best fellows in the world, and a member of the Mandalay Club. He had been all through the Crimean War with the British Army, and had the most wonderful collection of photographs of that campaign. Sir George Wolseley, who was commanding in Upper Burma at the time, was a personal friend of his, and he was a welcome guest at every regimental mess and club throughout Burma. As



A GROUP OF BURMESE CHILDREN IN COURT DRESS DANCING BEFORE H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR
AT MANDALAY



the photographer of the place he was naturally most anxious to get a good group of His Royal Highness and staff, and I had arranged, with the Prince's permission, to have one taken at our garden-party. But unfortunately for him, we had as one of our side-shows a tug-of-war between Burmese damsels, and this so interested and amused the Prince that several more contests, not provided for on the card, had to be arranged. The consequence was, when we eventually sat down to have the group taken, the light was defective, and Beato, to his great regret, failed to develop anything fit for printing. His loss was, however, partially made good in rather an amusing way. The town had arranged, with the Prince's consent, to present him with an album of the principal views of Mandalay, and as he was particularly fascinated with the carriage and the mounted escort which accompanied him on our various sight-seeing expeditions, he asked me to be careful to include a photograph of the cortège in the album. It was interesting from the fact that it consisted entirely of Burmese ponies, none of which exceeded twelve hands in height. I accordingly arranged with Beato to have a photograph taken at the entrance to Government House. He took several successfully, but for the last one he insisted upon my getting into the waggonette and holding the reins. To oblige him I did so. In many Burmese homes I am to this day pointed out as His Royal Highness going out from Government House for his morning drive !!!

And that reminds me there is just one other little incident I would like to add, as it illustrates the personal and human side of a Prince who is now dead. In bidding

me good-bye he presented me—as royalty usually does on these occasions—with a pin as a souvenir of his visit. But what I want specially to bring to notice is the fact that he did not *present* it. He shoved it in my trouser pocket !!



Photo. by S. J. J. J.

BEATO'S LITTLE DODGE. I UNINTENTIONALLY POSE AS H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR



CHAPTER XV

Our trip to the Ruby Mines with Sir Lepel Griffin—How shareholders can be bamboozled when a “boom” is in the air—Lady Lepel amongst the Kachin women—Tour to Fort Stedman—Amusing incident on the march—The great Durbar—Halt at Mandalay, where I enter my new purchase for a steeplechase—Result of a trial spin—Return to Rangoon

A FORTNIGHT taken up in the entertainment of royalty naturally sets back the hands of the administrative clock, and Sir Charles found himself compelled to remain at Rangoon for some considerable time, settling urgent and important affairs of State which demanded his immediate and personal attention.

It was much against his wish, as the touring season had set in, and being a man who believed that you could only get to know a country by making yourself personally known to the people in it, he was a great exponent of practising what he preached, and was never at Rangoon when he could possibly get away from it. Personally, I looked forward to the touring season immensely, as having all the arrangements of his tours in my own hands, I was a far more important personage in camp than when at headquarters. Moreover, it enabled one to see an enormous amount of the country, and I don't suppose there is any man of my time who saw more of Burma than I did.

With the exception of Bhamo, which the Chief visited

when I was away on short leave, and Moulmein—which funnily enough is only a day's journey by sea from Rangoon—I have seen every headquarter District in Burma, and most of the Shan States.

One tour was, however, very much like another, and I will only describe two which were of special interest. The first was our visit to the Burma Ruby Mines, and the second that to the Shan States.

It will be remembered that a lease of the Burma Ruby Mines had, in 1884, been granted to a company for a period of seven years ; that the Company had been floated in London under the auspices of a well-known financier ; and that the scramble for shares, when people were falling over each other in their greed to secure them, had seldom or never been equalled. The lease, which had been forced on the local government by the authorities at home, had given us a great deal of trouble, and Sir Charles, who was naturally anxious to see for himself how things were working there, took advantage of the arrival of Sir Lepel Griffin—who was the Chairman of the Company—to make a joint visit with him to the mines.

Sir Lepel had recently been married, and, combining business with pleasure, made his visit to us his honeymoon trip. We left Rangoon in the Government yacht *Irrawaddy*, and proceeded up the river of the same name to a place called Kyanmyat, which was the river port for Mogok, the headquarters of the Ruby Mines District. The distance from the river-bank was, as far as I can remember, about sixty miles. Disembarking here, the rest of the journey was made by road, accompanied by a military escort.

The Company had been at work for over a year when we visited the mines, and it had been ascertained beyond doubt, that while their employees were very busy digging up little beyond mud, thousands of rupees' worth of rubies were passing steadily through the Mandalay Post Office every week. It was the Chairman's business to find out what was wrong, and it did not prove a difficult skein to unravel. We were soon to see how, with a "boom" in the air, shareholders can be bamboozled, and a vast amount of money squandered. From the moment we landed it appeared to us that the expenditure had been of a most lavish and generous nature, and from what we saw subsequently at the mines, our opinion was more than confirmed.

At the landing-place, as far as the eye could reach, and for a considerable distance along the line of march, there was machinery—machinery of all sorts, and as long as it was machinery, it didn't matter much what machinery it was. Nobody knew what it was for, or where it was to go, and it had been lying there for months, and for all I know to the contrary, it may be lying there still. On our four days' journey to the mines we met several caravans of bullocks—the transport animal of the country—all loaded up with bottled beer and other luxuries for the staff of the Ruby Mines. And when we got there what a staff it was! The Chairman during his stay made drastic reductions and alterations, and many a man had, I fear, cause to remember and regret our arrival. But what else could he do? Let me give an instance or two of the extravagance. Here was one man, who had been drawing Rs. 300 a month as stud-groom. There was not only

no stud, but there was not an animal in the place to look after. An elaborate piece of machinery had been erected near the mouth of the mine, said to be the latest thing in the way of inventions for sifting and washing rubies. But there was some mistake, and it turned out in the end to be a threshing machine! Then, again, the Deputy-Commissioner, the head of the District, and the other Government servants were content to live in locally built bungalows, for which they paid from Rs. 60 to 100 a month rent. The houses for the Burma Ruby Mines staff were all made in Bombay and sent over in sections, at a cost of something like Rs. 15,000 per house. And so it went on. Nothing but waste and extravagance on every side. Sir Lepel Griffin had made his reputation in India as one of the best administrators in the Civil Service. I fancy his report on what he found at Mogok must have been worth reading. I should much like to have seen it.

I forgot to mention that Lady Griffin accompanied us on this expedition, and being the first European woman ever seen in the District, her appearance at the weekly bazaar where I took her created no end of a sensation amongst the Shan and Kachin women. She was a very pretty young English girl of the blonde type, and her golden hair simply fascinated the people. The women in particular could not leave her alone. They hemmed her in in the most embarrassing manner, and when I found them pawing her, feeling her dress and then her hair, I began to get a little uneasy, for we were amongst a crowd of some thousands. But her little ladyship seemed rather amused than frightened, and when, to my

astonishment, she finally let down her golden locks, and the Kachin females realised that she actually was a real live woman like themselves, they let out a yell of delighted laughter.

All the same, I was glad to get her away and safe home without any contretemps.

The last tour I made with Sir Charles was, from a political standpoint, perhaps the most important of them all, and I was once again able to visit Fort Stedman in the Shan States.

When one remembers that the Shan States comprise a territory of sixty thousand square miles, ruled by many quasi-independent chiefs, each supreme in his own territory, it will be readily admitted that it was of importance to have them with us rather than against us. Hitherto under nominal Burmese rule, they had been fighting amongst themselves, and frequently in spasmodic efforts rebelling against Burmese tyranny. When they came under us all this was altered, and beyond being assessed for tribute based on what they had paid to the King of Burma, they had little or nothing to complain about. They were assured against outside aggression, and all inter-tribal quarrels were now settled amicably by a reference to the paternal Government. But we were not always exactly on the spot, and though the *Sawbwas* professed loyalty and zeal, they were somewhat backward in paying the very small tribute demanded. On this account Sir C. Crosthwaite deemed it expedient to proceed to the Shan States in person, in order to hold a Durbar of all the Shan *Sawbwas*, or chieftains, so that he could

publicly explain to them, as the head of the Government, the exact position in which they were placed, and to point out to them that they had certain duties and obligations to perform in return for the benefits conferred upon them.

It was the first Durbar of the sort ever held, and the place selected by the Chief for holding it was Fort Stedman, the capital of the Southern Shan States.

Upon me devolved the organisation of, and the arrangements for, the tour, and as it was an important occasion, a considerable mounted escort had to be provided, and I think all told we had a staff of eight to ten European officers. The marching was necessarily slow, but once we got up amongst the hills, where you had mile upon mile of the most glorious undulating downs, we many a time left the escort in charge of its officers and galloped for the sheer joy of galloping.

One amusing episode, and typical of Sir Charles, occurred on the outward march. Each Sawbwa through whose territory we passed had been ordered to meet the Chief Commissioner at his own boundary, and escort him through his territory. This was demanded as a mark of submission and respect to the head of the Government. But there was one gentleman we were a bit doubtful about, and another officer and myself rode on in advance to see that he was present and ready at his post. As we feared, he was not, and we had to wait about half an hour before he put in an appearance. We had had a great scamper that morning over some beautiful country, and we were all hot and more or less dirty, and I am sure no stranger could possibly have taken Sir Charles from his

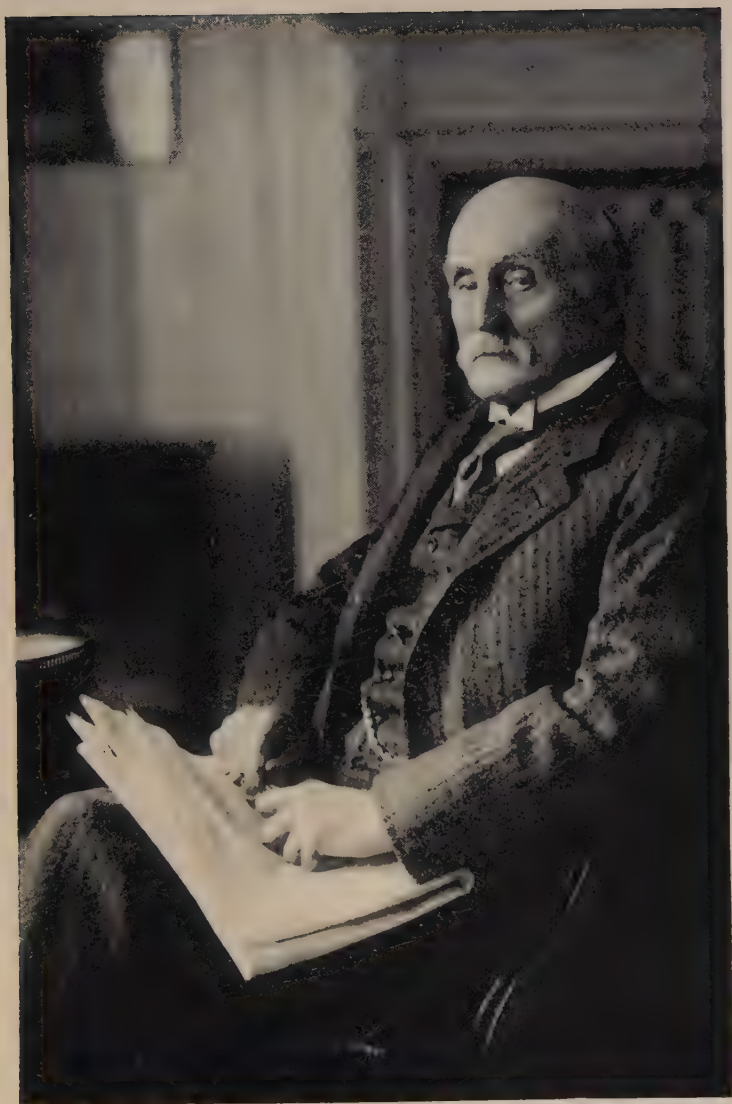


Photo. by Elliott & Fry

SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE, K.C.S.I., CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF BURMA



appearance for the Governor of a British province. But our friend the Sawbwa was to realise it very shortly, and in a very forcible manner.

Presently, amidst a tremendous tom-toming and firing of muskets, the gentleman appeared with a collection of golden umbrellas and an enormous retinue of scallywags.

The Sawbwa sauntered leisurely along, smoking a huge cigar, and just as he was to meet the Chief, he had a huge gilded chair or throne brought forward, on which, I suppose, his intention was to seat himself. Before he could effect this piece of impertinence Sir Charles ordered the chair to be swung round, and sitting in it himself, he called upon the Sawbwa to *sheko* to him. This in English means throwing oneself on one's knees and making humble submission. It was just the thing to do, and the time to do it. The retainers were staggered at seeing their "king" at the feet of our Chief, and the incident, we afterwards ascertained, had an excellent effect. There was no telegraph in the Shan States, yet so wonderful is the system of communication from village to village in the East, that within twenty-four hours the matter was being discussed in every bazaar in the States.

The Durbar was a great success, and a most imposing ceremony. It was, moreover, a very notable assemblage. The Chief Commissioner addressed the Sawbwas at length, and reminded them that the peace and quiet which they were now enjoying under our rule was the work of the British power; that it had been earned only by the soldiers of the Queen-Empress, and at the cost of the Government of India. All that was now required of them was to pay their tribute, and to govern their terri-

tories with justice, and to live in peace with one another. Two of the Sawbwas who had rendered good service to the Government were then rewarded and decorated with the medal and gold chain of honour: the special gift of the Viceroy for local services in Burma. The Durbar was then closed, and after receiving the following day the different chiefs in private audience, we bade good-bye to Fort Stedman, and returned to Mandalay.

On arriving at Mandalay we found that a Gymkhana Race Meeting was shortly to be held, and as I had just purchased a very promising Shan pony, I decided to see what he was made of, and accordingly entered him for the steeplechase. He was a born jumper, and had a good turn of speed, but like all Shan and Burman ponies, was an animal of moods. The morning after our arrival I took him up to the course to try him, but—fortunately, as it turned out—having no other saddle available, rode him in an ordinary mounted infantry saddle, which, being constructed to carry holsters, has a particularly high pommel. Shwebo, as he was called, was in a bad mood, and do what I could nothing would induce him to look at a jump. So, in order to take the conceit out of him, I belted him round the flat. We had been round once, and were in the act of passing the vertical posts and rails of the grand-stand, going *eighteen annas*, when Shwebo realised that it might be my intention to take him round a second time. He was not taking any. Have you ever seen a dog go under a gate? Well, this is just the game Shwebo wanted to play on me. After passing the grand-stand enclosure, he suddenly bored right across the course, and ducking his head tried to get under the boundary

rail ! The high pommel of the saddle caught the rail and dropped him on his nose, and me on the grass. Shortly afterwards I advertised that pony as quiet to ride and drive, with all the usual allurements in vogue with the seller of an animal requiring a purchaser. Shwebo eventually changed hands, but never did any good for himself, and when I left Burma he was earning his daily corn in the shafts of a cab in the streets of Rangoon—the only work he was fit for.

It is something to be able to say that, since this visit of the Chief Commissioner to Fort Stedman, the peace of the Shan States has not been broken. The Sawbwas have paid their tribute regularly, and the country is prospering as it never prospered before.

But somehow or another that journey to the Shan States, although we all enjoyed it thoroughly, had a disastrous effect upon our health. Two of the officers with us on that occasion died shortly after their return to Burma, and nearly all of us, including the Chief and myself, had, as a result of it, to take sick leave.

The strain on a man in the position of a Chief Commissioner taking over a huge province such as Upper Burma, with all the difficulties which beset such an undertaking, must be enormous, and Sir Charles never spared himself. For four years in a bad climate his had been the guiding hand in striving to organise out of chaos a helpful and strong government for Upper Burma. That he succeeded beyond even his hopes does not admit of contradiction or question. And when he finally left the country it might safely be said that a lady travelling by herself from Bhamo to Rangoon was as safe as she would be

going from Paddington to the City on a Bayswater bus.

He went home ill and tired out with hard and incessant work, and within a couple of months of his departure I followed him with a similar illness, which was to wipe a couple of years out of my life.

PART III
INDIA

CHAPTER XVI

On sick furlough in England—Appointed Assistant Commissioner, and services transferred to India

SIX years of continuous service in a climate such as that provided by the Nicobars and Burma proved very nearly too much for me. I was invalided home with acute dysentery, and of the two years spent in England, at least sixteen months of it were spent in bed. English doctors in those days knew little or nothing of Eastern complaints, and had it not been for my brother Ernest realising that fact, and insisting on placing me in the hands of that great specialist, Sir Patrick Manson, there is little doubt that these most interesting reminiscences would not have had pen and ink wasted upon them. My last recorded weight was taken in the Rangoon Gymkhana Club, when I turned the scale at 12 st. 2 lb., and when my brother discovered me alone and disconsolate in a small farmhouse in Surrey, I could barely weigh in with 7 st. 7 lb. There was clearly not much left of me, and that I am alive and hale and hearty to-day is entirely due to the unceasing care and kindness I received at the hands of Sir Patrick Manson.

During this long illness my experience of nurses was, to say the least, varied. They were all good, very good, and excellent, and what we poor male cripples would do without them I for one cannot conceive. To me they were angels in human form; but even of angels, when

accompanied by prolonged illness, you can have enough. On recovering from dysentery, Sir Patrick sent me to recoup at Southsea, when, as bad luck would have it, I was bowled over, while in a very weak state, by the then new scourge of influenza. It was raging badly at the time, and when I received orders once again to go to bed and be nursed, it seemed to me to be the end of all things. A professional nurse had been ordered in, but as the supply was not equal to the demand, I had to wait and take what came along. I can see her arriving now. It was in the dusk of the evening when my bedroom door slowly opened, and a vision of a real live Sarah Gamp appeared before me, blocking up the entire threshold; smiling and washing her hands in the true Gampish manner. Disconsolate and depressed, a sickly sort of smile crept over my countenance, and forcing myself to be polite, expressed the hope that she had at least pulled her last patient through. Her reply was typical.

“No, I’m afraid I didn’t. I only got there just in time to wash him!!!”

But let me do the dear old lady justice, and say that she was with me for nearly three months, and was one of the kindest and best of nurses.

Owing to this second illness it became necessary to obtain an extension of leave, and under the rules of the service, when one is physically unable to appear before the Medical Board at the India Office, a certificate to that effect has to be furnished and signed by two local practitioners. My certificate was as follows:

“Certified that Mr. Stanley W. Coxon is suffering from excessive anæmic debility, consequent upon acute

dysentery, complicated by severe malarial poisoning, and an attack of Russian influenza followed by broncho-pneumonia."

In vain did I protest that instead of an extension of leave the India Office would send me a coffin. The doctors would not alter or modify it in any way, and the certificate is still, no doubt, on record in some India Office pigeon-hole.

For some months it was a very near thing with me, and on two separate occasions my people were summoned to Southsea with a view to bidding me a fond and a long farewell. But somehow or another that big black mourning coach sort of thing did not appeal to me in the least, and by good luck and good nursing, I managed to defer the drive. In the summer time I found myself out and about again, rebuilding my constitution in a small ro-ton yacht in the Solent, and towards the end of the year 1892 the Medical Board of the India Office were able to pass me as fit for duty. As, however, it was not considered advisable for me to again court disaster in Burma, my services were transferred to India. I forgot to mention that the last thing Sir Charles Crosthwaite did for me before he left Burma was to effect an exchange for me from the Police to the Civil Service. Finding that they had not sufficient civilians of experience to fill the appointments in the new province of Upper Burma, the Government of India opened out eight vacancies among the military and police officers then serving in the country, and one of these fell to me. Hence on my return to duty it was as a civilian and no longer as a police officer that I embarked for India.

CHAPTER XVII

Join at Jubbulpore as Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces—Sir Antony MacDonnell appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and proceed with him as Private Secretary—Just a word or two about Bengal—The Babu episode—The Calcutta Golf Club—I prove myself to be an Irishman—Posted to Saugor as Assistant Commissioner—My first attempt at pig-sticking—Fall ill and proceed on leave to Australia

MY old friend, now Sir Antony MacDonnell, K.C.S.I., had in the meantime been appointed Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, and on joining at Jubbulpore, I was glad to find that I was once again to serve under him. During the few months we spent at Jubbulpore and Pachmarhi I had sufficient leisure to work up for my departmental examinations, and in May passed in Criminal Law and Procedure, Revenue, Treasury Accounts, and Hindustani. It was essential to pass these before I could be confirmed in my appointment, and later on, when Sir Antony was selected to officiate in Calcutta as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, it enabled me to accept the position of Private Secretary, which he was kind enough to offer me.

The month of May is admittedly the hottest month of the year in India, and never shall I forget the heat of that journey as we travelled down together by train from Pachmarhi to Calcutta. There were deputations of important personages to be received at all the principal stations, and the only way we could face the ordeal was by constantly pouring iced soda-water over each other's heads. And as this cooling process had to be continued

throughout the night, we were little prepared for the official reception the following morning at Calcutta.

Unlike the globe-trotter who writes a book on India after a cold weather scamper through the country, I do not propose to discuss my time in Bengal. The work and the experience were, however, both intensely interesting, for while in Burma I had witnessed the construction of the engine of administration in the formation of the new province of Upper Burma, here in Bengal I was to get an insight into the smooth working of the administrative machine after over half a century of careful oiling by the most capable administrators in the world.

The six months we put in in Bengal were spent chiefly in Calcutta and Darjeeling, with a short trip into Behar for the express purpose of knighting that famous indigo planter and Behar sportsman, Sir Paddy Hudson, K.C.I.E. There is no more hospitable city in the world than Calcutta, and in the cold weather, when the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and the members of the Government of India are all in residence, the season is one long round of functions and festivities. In Darjeeling Bengal has the finest hill-station in the East, and no visitor to India should fail to pay her a visit. Mozuffapore, in Behar, where we held the Durbar at which Paddy Hudson was made "Sir Paddy," is as good an all-round sporting District as one could wish for. But when you have said this you have filled the cup of Bengal to the brim, and for the rest—well, I would rather serve anywhere else in the world.

The Bengali Babu of Calcutta is an excellent fellow in his way. He shines in all the arts and crafts of peace,

but he is not a warrior. Clever, cute and industrious, he forms the backbone of all the ministerial offices in the city, but he never was and never will be of the stuff soldiers are made of. I was accordingly exceedingly surprised to find at our first official function in Calcutta a typical Babu strutting across the grounds with a Frontier medal on his breast. It turned out that he had been a clerk in the Commissariat, and was present at the Manipur disaster. Now everybody knows that the Manipur disaster was a very bloody business, in which the Chief Commissioner of Assam together with a number of British officers and men were foully murdered in a most treacherous manner. The following is a fairly accurate account of it as given me by the Babu himself :

“Sir, it was a terrible scene, and when I found the bullets flying about me in all directions I made sure that my time on this earth was limited, and my heart almost stopped beating with fright. I did not, however, for one moment lose my presence of mind. Peering out from the foot of my tent, I realised that about thirty paces away to my right front there was a *pakkha* (stone-built) latrine, and that if I could only reach it my life might be saved.

“Wriggling along on my belly, and without daring for a moment even to lift my head up, I reached the shelter in safety, and remained there in a recumbent attitude until peace was restored” !!!

Not a vestige of shame was there in the narrative, and, in fact, he quite thought it was something to be extremely proud of. And yet this is the type of Bengali Babu we hear of parading the streets of Calcutta shouting, “*Bande Matheram*,” and to hell with the English !!

Were the British to leave India to-morrow, not one of them would be left alive long enough to state that he was the son of his mother. But so pampered and spoilt have these Babus become under our régime that they have entirely lost all sense of proportion, and their one aim and object is now, for some strange reason or other, to vilify and insult the people who have protected them for so long.

Only recently, as we all know, they made no less than three attempts on the life of Sir Andrew Fraser, their Lieutenant-Governor; the last being a shot at him with a revolver at close quarters while addressing a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association. A miraculous escape from a dastardly crime. For if anybody was a good friend to the native, Sir Andrew was certainly that man. I have had the pleasure of serving under him both as Commissioner, and again when he was Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, and a kinder or more considerate Chief it would be difficult to find. He was essentially a strong man, but even in those days many of us used to think that he was inclined to be if anything rather too pro-native. And if the Babu will treat his friend in this manner, is it not high time that sterner measures were taken to teach him manners?

In a most interesting book called the *West in the East*, by Price Collier, an American, we get an unbiased view of the present situation as it appears to an outsider, and this is what he says:

“British rule in India is the greatest blessing and the most splendid service ever rendered to one people by a stronger nation. Unrest is not new in India. Many people seem to think that there were peace and har-

monious interests in India before the British took control. The readers of these pages will discover the error. The continuous unrest of centuries is only now whipped anew into froth by a subtle use of religious and racial prejudice, in order to stiffen the demand of India for the Indians, the real meaning of which is *India policed by the British for the benefit of the Brahman hierarchy and the Babu.*"

Part of my duties as Private Secretary was to see that all matters coming from the Secretariat for the orders of the Lieutenant-Governor were promptly placed before him. Finding one morning a particularly large file of papers labelled "The Calcutta Golf Club," my curiosity was aroused, and before passing it on I quite "enjoyed" myself. As everyone who has been to Calcutta knows, the golf course is on the large Maidan surrounding Fort William, which is naturally the property of the Military Department. When therefore golf links were suggested, the permission of the Military had to be obtained—firstly, for the laying out of the course itself, and secondly, for the construction of the club-house. All very right and proper. But subsequent to the erection of this club-house, some rash, but no doubt over-zealous secretary, had had the audacity, without in the first place soliciting similar sanction, to erect a small, insignificant, lean-to corrugated iron shed, as a protection for a few caddies in the "rains." Hence this huge file of correspondence, hence this molehill which had been converted into a mountain, and hence the farce which was about to be enacted. A mere perusal of the papers was sufficient to show anyone the absurdity of the whole thing, and the orders received from the Governor on the point were only typical of

the man. On a certain day, and at a certain hour, all the high officials, both civil and military in any way connected with the correspondence, were directed to assemble at the Calcutta Golf Club to meet his honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

We drove up in state with the escort, and in the midst of cocked hats and feathers, the rattling of scabbards and the jingling of spurs, we once and for all time decided that this caddies' shelter, measuring some ten feet by eight, could not by any stretch of the imagination be utilised as a shelter trench for a Russian Army attacking Fort William !!

One other little anecdote, which is against myself, and I have done with Calcutta. Whenever the Governor dined out or attended any sort of function one of the staff had, as a matter of course, to attend him. The Hon. Mr. O'Kinealy, one of the High Court Judges, and a very old friend of Sir Antony's, had asked him to a man's dinner at the United Service Club, and it being my night on duty, it fell to my lot to accompany him. On assembling in the room our host looking round remarked: "Yes, I think we are all Irishmen, but I'm just a bit doubtful about that fellow Coxon." Well, it may seem an asinine admission to have to make, but I wasn't at the time quite sure what I was. My reply, however, gave me away entirely, and delighted the heart of our very genial host! In the most innocent manner I remarked: "No, sir, I'm afraid you can't claim me. I was born there, but I've never been there!" I have worn the shamrock ever since.

It reminds me somewhat of the story of an Irishman

in a smoking-room of a club being ragged by a number of men who were trying to convince him that he was a German, simply from the fact that he had been born in Berlin. After vainly endeavouring to make them understand that they were talking absolute rot, he said, "Look here, me bhoys, if you won't listen to reason, perhaps you'll be good enough to allow me to illustrate the point. Supposing now the cat was to have a litter of kittens in the kitchen oven. What would you call them? Biscuits!!"

On the expiry of the officiating appointment in Calcutta Sir Antony MacDonnell rejoined the Home Office, and I, reverting to my permanent post of Assistant Commissioner in the Central Provinces Commission, found myself posted as such to the Saugor District.

Jubbulpore and Saugor are the two principal military stations in the northern portion of the Central Provinces, but while under Lord Kitchener's new scheme of redistribution, the former has been increased enormously in strength, the latter has as a consequence lost in importance. In my time we had a garrison of one Native Cavalry Regiment, one Native Infantry Regiment, a wing of a British Regiment, and a Battery of Field Artillery. The climate is good, the sport available excellent, and our community was sufficiently large to make things bearable even in the hot weather. We had quite a decent Club and Gymkhana, and what with the ever-refreshing early morning gallop, a long day's work, with cricket, golf, and tennis each evening on the off-days, polo three days a week, and pig-sticking on Sunday, there was little to complain about. Polo was no new game to me, and as I had brought with

me from Calcutta a couple of very excellent waler ponies, and the man chumming with me lent me two more, I was able to take the game up quite seriously. And what a grand game it is, only to be beaten by pig-sticking, which in my opinion is the most fascinating sport in the world.

When first shown the ground over which the Tent Club hunted the wily boar, I registered an inward vow that nothing would ever induce me to join it. If you got on to it by accident in the course of a morning or evening ride, your instinct would tell you to at once dismount and lead your horse, and your instinct would be right. However, as I did eventually join the Club, I must just try and describe at least my first endeavour.

One Sunday morning they inveigled me into going out, presumably to breakfast with the hunt. After breakfast it was, "Well, you might just as well come on and see us make a move!" I did, and I was then presented with a spear, and the rest of the story is given as I can remember it. There were on this occasion eight of us in two parties, a horse party, and a pony party; three in the former, five in the latter, with a man in command of each. The scene of operations was about a mile from where we had breakfasted, and the beaters had been sent on beforehand, so as to be in readiness when we arrived. The plan was to beat a long low-lying hill, while we took up our positions under cover, where, once the pig were driven out, we could intercept them. It was exciting enough even watching the beaters at work, and the firing of guns soon gave us intimation that pig were in the beat. Slowly but surely the beaters drove them along, until at the end of the hill we could see a large *sounder*, or family of pig,

emerge, doubtful whether to go on and face the open, or defy the guns and beaters, and by breaking back regain the safety of the jungle. Bang went a gun or two, loud yelling and beating of sticks by the beaters, and away across the open dashed the entire *sounder*. Sharp came the whispered orders in quick succession, "Stand to your horses." "Mount." "Ride." And for the rest the only thing I could see in front of me, galloping hell for leather, was that great big splendid animal called the boar.

Pig-sticking is not only hunting, but it is racing and hunting combined ; for the man who can first show blood on his spear claims the pig, and the greatest number of first spears in the season wins, for that year, the much-coveted silver spear of the Tent Club. Needless to say I did not get a spear that day, but when I came up the sight that met my eyes is not one easily forgotten. For here was this splendid old boar standing at bay with no less than three broken hog spears in his body, and charging furiously and fearlessly at each and every horseman who approached him. For fully twenty minutes did he maintain his desperate fight, and keep nine armed men dancing round him before they could get in and finish him off. I take my hat off to him, for I believe him to be the pluckiest of the brute creation. I never missed a Sunday afterwards, and when in later years I was Deputy-Commissioner of Chanda, I had many a good run with the Nagpur Tent Club—which by the way is the oldest Tent Club in India. And this recalls to my mind the fact that we must have been rather wags in those days, for we had as Deputy-Commissioner of Saugor a Colonel Hogg, who had a large family of pretty daughters, and the contingent was always

known in pig-sticking parlance as the "old grey Boar and the Sounder."

It was here in Saugor that I was to get my first experience of famine, a subject in which I became a bit of an expert later on. There was a certain amount of distress in Saugor itself, owing to the partial failure of the crops, but in Damoh, the adjoining district, the conditions called for immediate action. The railway from Jubbulpore came only as far as Saugor, so that all grain for the relief of Damoh had to be stored at the station, and carted thence some thirty-five miles by road; and it fell to my lot to be appointed "Famine Transport Officer" in charge of the operations. Unfortunately, as the "rains" were on, and my work necessitated being in the open from daylight till dark, my old enemy, bronchitis, eventually got hold of me, and before many weeks were over I had to take to my bed. Getting worse rather than better, I was ordered a complete change out of India, and to my great regret had to leave Saugor and take ship to Australia.

CHAPTER XVIII

Spend a happy time in Sydney—Station life in the Bush—A holocaust of rabbits, the pest of Australia—Kangaroo hunting—The trial of a Chinaman for assault—The Melbourne Cup—The "lady of the lift"—The Ferrier-Hamiltons of Elderslie—An afternoon ride in Australia—My gymkhana at Gisborne—The great Flemington racecourse—A comparison of the jumps there with those of Aintree—The Melbourne Cricket Ground—The greatest cricket match ever played

BEING compelled to leave India at a moment's notice, there was no time to get any letters of introduction to anyone down South, and when I embarked I had no fixed idea even as to my destination. Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney were all one to me, and yet such is the hospitality of the Australians, that they not only gave me a thoroughly good time, but also presented me with a wife.

My old element, combined with lovely weather, soon set me on my legs, and before we reached Australia the world was looking bright again. Amongst the passengers was a Mr. Livingstone Learmouth, who was going out on a visit to his station in New South Wales, and seeing one day some polo sticks in my cabin, he insisted on my accepting an invitation to go up and stay with him and help him to start polo—a game he had long been anxious to introduce up at his station. On arrival at Sydney we stayed together at the Australia Club, and as the races were on and the season in full swing, we managed to put

in a very agreeable time. Lunching one day at the Australian Hotel, my hostess, a Mrs. Bloxsome, said to me : "Oh, Mr. Coxon, there is a Melbourne girl here who is a great friend of mine, and I want to introduce you to her." Accompanying her to the landing, I was duly introduced to the young lady. As she was in the act of descending by the lift, the conversation was limited to "How do you do?" and "Good-bye." She is now my wife.

On leaving Sydney we travelled by train to Groongal, Learmouth's station, and perhaps the finest sheep-station in New South Wales. I went on a sort of week-end visit, and was there for about three months! But let me explain, in case my friends dub me "cadger," that my remaining on for so long was only on the distinct understanding that my services—such as they were—should be utilised in assisting in the work on the station. This was readily assented to, and to anyone who is fond of a life in the saddle, let me commend a long visit to a sheep-station in Australia. With the exception of a cook-housekeeper no servants are kept, and everything you want done you have to do yourself. A slouch hat, flannel shirt, breeches, and boots were the daily wear, though in my case for boots I always substituted the Indian *pattis*. This was in the year '95, and before the South African War, when such a thing as a pair of *pattis* was an entire novelty in the bush of Australia. Being asked one day by Hearne, the manager, to go down to the railway-station for a parcel which he was expecting, I caught and mounted a horse and went off.¹ As luck would have it, the train

¹ To explain this it may be necessary to say that though we had over a hundred horses of sorts on the station, they all lived in the open

was full of shearers going through from one station to another. Noticing a number of them staring at me rather strangely, it somewhat upset my equilibrium, until I heard one fellow exclaiming to his pal, "Lord love me, Bill, if there isn't a blighter 'ere who's been wounded in both legs!" Some people say that Australians are brusque in manner, and inclined to be uncivil and too independent. Not a bit of it. Treat them as men, and they are the best in the world. I am not, of course, alluding in these remarks to the managers and owners, but to the hands employed on the stations, and to the men one generally meets in Bushland. I have worked with them, played polo with them, and raced against them at Bush races, and a finer set of fellows you could never wish to meet. But you must always remember that they are of a young country, inclined perhaps to be touchy on the subject, certainly much more free and easy than we are at home, and the last thing they can stand is anything in the shape of superciliousness or patronage. This trait in their character is not always understood by Englishmen visiting Australia, and I am sorry for it. To know them, you have to live and work with them, and you will then find that they invariably refer to the old country as their "home," and that there are no more loyal subjects of the King to be found anywhere.

Chief amongst the various duties pertaining to a sheep station are those of shearing, foot-rotting, attending to lambs and ewes in the lambing season, and droving. The

in the paddocks. There was but one old moke kept in the yard with a halter round his neck, and every time a horse was wanted the whole lot of them had to be rounded up into the yard; and it was no light work, until you got used to it.

first three have all to be carefully learnt to be appreciated, but in case anybody may think that droving means what you see in England, viz. 50 to 60 sheep being driven along a road to market, let me mention that my first effort in this direction in Australia consisted in helping another man with a couple of dogs to look after a flock of over 10,000. And the rate per day is generally about three miles ! The unfortunate part of life in the Bush is the want of sport. Beyond a little kangaroo hunting, and duck shooting, and the destruction of the everlasting rabbit, there is literally nothing. And as to rabbits, you get tired of killing them.

To give some idea of the pest rabbits are to the country, I may say that at Groongal, which is a station of some 500,000 acres, and completely fenced in with wire-netting, I used frequently in the evening to take the dogs out, and without a gun, in the course of an hour, run down a hundred or more of them. The property is fenced in on the theory that so long as they can keep outside rabbits from getting in they can deal with those they have on the land. With this object in view, they employ several gangs of rabbiters all the year round, whose sole object is the destruction of the pest. This, however, would be of no avail but for the annual holocaust which is accomplished in the hot weather, when all the water-holes are dry, and the only water available is a big pond close by the home-stead. When the time is considered ripe, this pond is also fenced in with wire-netting, and night after night more and more rabbits forgather outside with a view to a drink. Then, when the management consider that they have got about all they can expect, the netting is removed in the course of the day and the water poisoned. The record

kill at Groongal in one night is 78,000 rabbits! No, they were not pulling my leg, for I saw it in print, and Hearne, the manager, told me that looking from the homestead window the next morning towards the pond, it looked for all the world as if there had been a heavy fall of snow. All their poor little white tails turned up to the sky!

As to kangaroo hunting, the usual way is to run them down with special-bred dogs, known as kangaroo-hounds. They are apparently a cross between a greyhound and a boarhound, and are both fast and powerful. Hunting kangaroos one day in the neighbourhood of Groongal, I had an experience which I have since been told is uncommon, if not unique. We had killed two old men kangaroos, and the weather being exceedingly hot, the dogs were done to a turn. In fact, they were so exhausted that they were lying gasping on the ground, and we had to throw cold water over their bodies in an attempt to revive them. They were past all further work that day. A man named Pearson and myself were the only two left in at the second kill, and Pearson realising the condition of the dogs, said to me, "Now if you care to see how this sort of sport can be carried on without dogs, come along and I'll show you." Mounting again, and getting on to another "old man," we proceeded to run him down. It was a long chase, but at last we got him tiring. Gradually Pearson drew nearer and nearer to him, and the pace was beginning to tell. Next, he was alongside the kangaroo and watching his opportunity, and drawing gradually closer to him, I saw him stoop down in his saddle and with his right hand extended just give the "old man" the

slightest lift under the tail while in the act of jumping, and the next moment he was on the ground and completely done for.

While at Groongal we were asked to a place called Deniliquin for a wedding and other festivities. We accepted, and rode in to Hay, whence I had the novel experience of an eighty-mile coach drive in a Bush coach—an experience, let me confess, I am not anxious to repeat. What with dances, picnics, races, and a tennis tournament, we had the best of good times, and I had the honour of organising and playing in the first game of polo ever played at Deniliquin. My intention was to return from Deniliquin to Groongal, but my good friends at Hay, including Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Landale, the newly married pair, told me that it was out of the question, that the Melbourne Cup, the great race meeting of Australia, was shortly to be run, that they were all going down to Melbourne for it, and that no English visitor could be allowed to miss it. Needs must, &c. So off to it I went. But before leaving Deniliquin I must relate an amusing story of a trial which was held there. A Chinaman was had up for assault and battery. He was found guilty, and sentenced to a fine of £2, 10s. 0d., or, in default, a month's imprisonment. The Chinaman, on hearing the sentence, looked up, and, with a smile which was "childlike and bland," said, "Me no savez." It was repeated. Still the same smile and the same reply, "Me no savez." At last the magistrate, losing patience, said to the policeman guarding the prisoner, "Constable X, please make the prisoner understand the finding of the Court, and that unless he pays the fine of £2, 10s. 0d. at once, he will most certainly have to go to prison for one month.'

The constable, knowing the ways of the wily Chinaman, took him by the arm, and shaking him, said, "Here, John, you better plover savez. That big man sitting up top-sides, he fine you five pounds."

John. "No dam fear, Mr. Policeman; £2, 10s. *od.*, and here you are!!"

This "pigeon" English of the Chinaman is always amusing, and it reminds me of another good story which was told me by my aunt, Mrs. Atwell Coxon, who had lived in Hong Kong for many years. Two midshipmen of the Fleet coming to call upon her one day, were announced by her Chinese butler in the following manner:

"Madam have got bottomsides (downstairs) two piecee man-of-war chilo (children)."

My sister, who was out globe-trotting in China, and who happened to be staying with my aunt at the time, also tells an amusing incident about a Chinaman which actually occurred to her. Going into a shop one day seeking curios, she asked of the shopkeeper the price of a certain article, when the following conversation took place:

John. "That piecee forty dollar, Missee."

She. "Oh, John, you one piecee thiefee man. Yah Sin up along got same piecee ten dollar."

John. "I no piecee thiefee man. You one little piecee b—y liar. My b'long Chlistian blother!!"

And of course you have heard the Chinaman's exclamation on seeing a motor for the first time, "My gollee, no pushee, no pullee, go like hellee!"

And that reminds me that while stopping at Hay I heard an amusing railway story. It appeared that the superintending engineer of the line was a man named

Donegan, who had for one of his district engineers away up in the bush another Irishman of the name of Flannagan, a young and zealous officer. And it came to pass one day that on Flannagan's section an engine got derailed, and deeming no doubt that he would gain kudos from his Chief for the prompt manner in which he got his engine going again, he sat down and wrote in a voluminous report showing exactly how it was done and who had done it. To his dismay, instead of receiving the complimentary epistle he expected, he got a curt note from Mr. Donegan—all in the third person—trusting that Mr. Flannagan would not again waste his Mr. (Donegan's) time by reporting each and every twopenny-halfpenny accident in a similar manner. Mr. Donegan had no time to read novels, let alone voluminous reports which were only fit for the waste-paper basket. Should he (Mr. Flannagan) have any occasion to report to him (Mr. Donegan) any similar accident, he (Mr. Flannagan) should confine himself strictly to facts and to as few words as possible.

As luck would have it, only a very few days after the receipt of the letter another derailment occurred on the same section. Flannagan reported it by wire to his chief as follows :

“ Off again—On again—Away again. Donegan—Flannagan.”

The invitation to the Melbourne Cup was a tempting one, but for me the acceptance was entirely a matter of *£ s. d.* I was not exactly a Pierpont Morgan at the time, and after solemnly counting the few sovereigns remaining in my possession, came to the conclusion that

there were sufficient for a festive fortnight, but that if no lucky speculation came my way during Cup Week, there would be nothing left but to curtail my leave and return by the first boat to India. With this one object in view I went to the London Hotel, the abode of "owners," instead of, as usual, to the Melbourne Club—which by the way is, in my opinion, the best and most comfortable club out of London. Coming home late one night after a dance, I forgathered with Charles, the well-known "boots" of this hotel, and over a friendly drink explained to him that it was up to him to find me a winner. He left me severely alone for the Derby, and the Melbourne Cup, and it was not until the third day, when things were looking serious, that Charles, on bringing me my morning tea, informed me that a gentleman upstairs, the owner of a horse called Honorarius, had given him a couple of sovereigns as a present, with the straight tip to make a bit with it on this particular gee. This was quite good enough for me, but as I was giving a luncheon party that day, and the horse was down to run in the second race, my difficulty was to get my money on in case I was not out in time. This problem was, however, solved by my tailor, for on going to him to have my hat blocked he sent me round to a shop where the wager could be placed at starting price. We had a very cheery luncheon party, and arrived out on the course just as the second race had been run, when lo and behold, up went Honorarius' number with a starting price of fourteen to one! Yes, you get decent odds in Australia, and I only hope Charles, with his share of the proceeds, did as well as I did with mine. It not only enabled me to spend the

rest of my leave in Australia, but it gave me the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with the "lady of the lift," to whom I had been introduced at the Australia Hotel in Sydney. In fact, it was on that very afternoon that we met again, and I had the privilege of escorting her to the paddock. On presenting her with her paddock voucher it was found to be in shape a heart, in colour green, with the letter "S" on one side, and the number 24 on the other. Being an Irishman, it was clearly my heart, and the letter "S" could stand for no other name but Stanley, mine own, while 24 was the exact age of the lady herself! What price the writing on the wall? But strange to say, the donor of the voucher knew nothing of these important details until, more than a year afterwards in London, on the great day when all was ventured, he found the same little green heart cosily reclining in the inside of his best girl's travelling clock!

After the race week at Melbourne I went up-country to Gisborne, and spent practically the remainder of my time in Australia with the Hamiltons of Elderslie, at Gisborne, and the Hamiltons of Lilliesleaf, Mount Macedon, where Miss May Bird (the lady of the lift) lived with her sister, Mrs. Claude Ferrier Hamilton. As the two houses were within decent riding distance of each other, it may be taken for granted we were a good deal together. And there can be no doubt about it that to enjoy genuine Australian hospitality you have got to go up-country for it. At Elderslie Mr. Hamilton lived with his two daughters, Blanche and Connie, both of whom are long since married; and yet in this large house, which was a veritable "Liberty Hall," there was but one servant, a cook, and a black boy

called Tabby. Seldom did we sit down less than ten to a meal, and often for week-ends, when friends came up from Melbourne and elsewhere, most at a moment's notice, some with none at all, we were nearer twenty than ten. Yes, it was a wonderful house, and I can never forget the very great kindness I received at the hands of all in it. And then there was Tabby, the ubiquitous and invincible Tabby. Everybody wanted Tabby, everyone called Tabby for different purposes and at the same time, and everybody got Tabby to do exactly what he or she wanted. One moment he was harnessing the buggy, the next helping to do up Miss Connie's back hair, the next shinning up the roof to fix a tile, and then sliding down again to give the finishing touch to the pastry for dinner ! At the head of this delightful home was old Tom Ferrier-Hamilton of Cairnhill, Ayrshire, Scotland ; a celebrity known to all who have ever been to Melbourne, and the dearest old fellow that ever lived. This is no flattery for favours received. Ask anyone who has ever had the honour of knowing him. For years he was a member of the Legislative Council, and took a prominent part in making Melbourne the splendid city it now is. He was also a famous sportsman, good at everything he took up, and, best of all, the father of the Australian M.C.C. The only thing he never could do was to lace his own boots. I do not think I remember seeing him once at Elderslie with his boots properly laced. Only just before he died, the Club had his portrait painted in oils and hung in the place of honour in the Melbourne Cricket Club Pavilion. As the two houses, that of himself and his son Claude, were so close together, we were frequently

forgathering for one thing or the other, and some of the rides we had in those days would astonish folks at home. On one occasion Miss Bird wanted to buy a pair of ponies her brother-in-law had heard of at a place called Bacchus Marsh. No time like the present, for there was the danger of losing them. That afternoon we set off, Miss Bird and I riding, Claude and his wife Beatrice driving in a waggonette and pair. The distance was about forty miles. We arrived there in the course of the evening, tried the ponies, and bought them the following morning, and in the afternoon rode home to Macedon with the noses of the new purchase tied on to the waggonette!

And that reminds me of a final effort I made by way of some small return to my hosts before taking my departure from Australia. The ladies had been besieged by their clergy to do something either for some cathedral or church, and being loth to take a stall in the bazaar, or knit socks or other rubbish which no one would buy, as a last resort appealed to me to help them out of their difficulty. The only thing I could think of was a gymkhana. The word even at that time had never been heard of in Australia, and after explaining to them that it was nothing to eat, I entered into details regarding my proposal. Suffice it to say that it was eagerly taken up, and the assistance I had from the first ensured its success. The gymkhana was largely advertised, and special trains were run for the occasion, and the venture proved a perfect windfall to the charity. Memory fails me regarding the various events on the card, all of which filled to overflowing, but two in particular come back to me which caused much amuse-

ment. The first was a very simple one. A small sort of steeplechase course had been marked out, and half-way round a paper screen was drawn across the turf, through which the horses had to pass. The Australians ridiculed the idea of a piece of paper stopping a horse when at full gallop in a race. About sixteen of them came at it for all they were worth, and of the number, at least half found themselves sprawling on the ground and cursing the paper obstacle. Every single horse had jibbed at it, and the only one eventually to get through was a wise little cob, who after kicking a hole with his hind legs, scampered through and won the race.

The other event was what was announced on the programme as "The Arithmetical Race." It was a nomination race by ladies, and also very simple. The men rode round a few jumps to their ladies, who were all standing in a row by the winning post. Dismounting, they received each a small sum contained in an envelope. The first rider in after another round of the course with a correct answer to the sum was to be declared the winner. Each sum was a simple addition sum of two rows of figures; but what caused all the worry, the alarm, the bad language, and the amusement, was the fact that instead of giving the dear souls—for it must be remembered the lady nominators had to do the sums—plain pounds, shillings, and pence, I had given them Indian money, in the shape of rupees, annas, and pice. But in the largeness of my heart I had offered them every assistance by explaining the letters R. A. P. (which had been substituted for £ s. d.). For in a corner by the sum I had written 1 R. = 16 A. ;

1 A.=12 P. (or one rupee equals sixteen annas, and one anna equals twelve pice).

No, nothing would do, it was horrid and disgraceful, and Mr. Coxon ought to be ashamed of himself! At last the knotty problem was solved by the financial authority of the place—the bank manager—coming to the assistance of his partner by saying, “There you are, of course I see it. R. A. P. must stand for roods, acres, and perches!” He added them up accordingly, but somehow or another the girl he befriended was not returned a winner!

The Melbourne Race Course is the finest in the world, and all the arrangements and appointments are as near perfect as possible. We have not a course to compare with it, and yet taking a first-class return from Melbourne to the Flemington Station, which is actually within the enclosure, costs 12s. 6d., and this includes admission to the grand-stand. The only extra charge is one of 2s. 6d. to the saddling paddock. Compare this with, say, Ascot, where you cannot possibly do a day’s racing in the Ascot week, *i.e.* comfortably, under five pounds! Perhaps the chief feature of the course is the hill immediately at the back of the grand-stand, which forms another and a natural grand-stand for the crowd.

A novelty on this stand is that, while all bookmakers are registered in Australia, the management insist on the bookies plying their trade on the hill wearing scarlet coats. And woe betide any unlucky bookie who with a view to a bolt tries to discard that coat. It is not possible. There are too many lusty souls looking after him, and consequently there is little or no welching done

in Australia. The starting gate, and the numbers on the saddle-cloths of the horses—innovations of quite recent years in England—were both going strong in Australia long before I was there in '95. English Committees, please note for future guidance.

Comparisons are often made between the stiffness of the jumps at Flemington and those of our great steeple-chase course at Aintree. From personal observation of both courses I am convinced that, while the jumps are bigger and broader at Aintree, those at Flemington are stiffer and more dangerous. If you look at the jumps at the Liverpool Course after the Grand National has been run, you will find huge gaps in the fences through which the horses have gone shoulder-high. Such a thing down South is an impossibility, for every jump on that course is solid and set straight up at you, while the four which face the horses opposite the grand-stand is the stiffest bit of jumping to be found anywhere. It consists of two posts and rails, one log fence, and a stone wall, each four feet six inches in height, and with only little more than jumping room between them. The posts and rails are built of solid four-inch timber clamped together with heavy iron clamps. The log fence is a pyramid of huge trees across the course, and there is no loose topping to the stone wall. Horses come at this quadruple for all they are worth, and many a horse—and jockey, too, for that matter—have been killed at this particular spot. I was once offered a mount to go for a morning's ride over this course, but there was nothing doing, thank you.

While on the subject of the Melbourne Race Course I may perhaps be permitted to compare the Melbourne

Cricket Ground with that of Lord's in London, again to the disadvantage of the old country, at least so far as spectators are concerned. We all know that huge eyesore the new mound at Lord's, where in wet weather you get drenched, in hot weather scorched, and in windy and cold weather frozen. No protection of any sort from either wind or rain or sun, and yet here in England for all the more important matches a charge of from 2s. 6d. to 5s. is made for that particular stand, while in Australia anyone paying half a crown is entitled to a comfortable seat in a covered stand, which includes admission to the ground. In fact, wherever you go, whether it is to a race meeting, a cricket or football match, or anything else to which the public are invited, the public in Australia are carefully catered for, while in England they are not. I happen to be a member of the M.C.C., so that when I go to Lord's I manage to see cricket more or less comfortably ; but how the Executive can expect cricket to attract nowadays under existing circumstances, and with the existing accommodation, is always a subject of wonder and discussion amongst the members. And yet Lord's is the best of all good clubs, and provides better accommodation than perhaps any club in England. No wonder attendances at cricket matches are steadily diminishing.

During my visit to Australia, A. E. Stoddart was touring there with his first cricket team; and I saw many of their matches. They had won all, or most of their state matches, and the Tests stood at two each, when the fifth or the rubber was to be decided on the Melbourne Cricket Ground. And that match was, I believe, the

greatest and most exciting cricket match ever played. Remember the circumstances. The final of the Tests between England and Australia, when they were both two up. A splendid ground, glorious weather, and a crowd of people, nearly all cricket enthusiasts, numbering over forty thousand, collected together from all parts of Australia, and even from Tasmania and New Zealand. Australia went in first, and made 414. Australians delighted, and foretelling a great victory. England replied with 385. In their second effort Australia compiled 267, leaving England the heavy task of making 297 in the last innings of a test match on a crumbling wicket. In addition to this, they had to go in late in the evening of the fourth day, when in a failing light they lost two wickets for 22. On the fifth day the crowd was, if possible, bigger than ever, the excitement intense, and the betting six to four on Australia. According to Australian opinion, everything depended that morning on what Stoddart would do. He had been batting consistently well throughout the tour, and until he was got rid of, anything might happen. Punctually to the hour fixed, he and Albert Ward, the overnight "Not Out," came out to face the bowling of M'Kibbin and Trott. You might have heard a pin drop as Stoddart took guard and had a final look round the ground—preparatory to taking the first ball. How's that? Up went the finger! And out went Stoddart, l.b.w. to the very first ball he received. Three English wickets for 22! Up went the hats from the crowd. Yells of good-natured delight from the home supporters, and the betting went from anything to a guinea to a gooseberry on the home team. But the

Australians had forgotten to properly appreciate the capabilities and the qualities of that sturdy little Yorkshireman J. T. Brown, who was the next to appear upon the scene. Poor little Jack! He has gone now, but that day was the cricket day of his life. He joined that dogged but finished performer Albert Ward, and between them they did the trick. Jack went to the wicket with a smile upon his face, and he was still smiling when, after the innings of his life, he was caught. Giffen bowled M'Kibbin for 140 of the best. We won that match by four wickets.

It has been said that an Australian crowd is always partial and biased. Not a bit of it. They are sportsmen, but at the same time very keen critics of cricket, and if anything displeases them, they don't fail to show it, whether it is done by their own men or their opponents, and if only those who charge them with this partiality had heard the Melbourne crowd cheering the Englishmen on the occasion of this splendid victory, they would for ever hold their peace. They *barrack*, as they term it, but they *barrack* both sides. It's all part of the game, which they thoroughly enjoy. In one of the latest test matches their great googlie bowler Hordern, who is by profession a dentist, was bowling over after over without success. At last, after Hobbs and Rhodes had helped themselves at his expense to about 175 for 0, one of his keenest supporters in the crowd yelled out in extreme disgust, "Now then, 'Ordern, extract that stump!!"

CHAPTER XIX

Posted to Raipur as Assistant Commissioner—Williamson the Bohemian—Inaugurate polo at Raipur—The youth does a small whisky-and-soda—Appointed Deputy-Commissioner of Chanda—My trouble with the coolie recruiters—My interview with Sir John Woodburn, K.C.S.I.

ON rejoining from Australia I found orders awaiting me at Bombay to proceed to Raipur, to which District I was posted as an Assistant Commissioner.

It was not by any means one of the best Districts, but being the headquarters of a Commissioner, and having a native regiment stationed at Raipur itself, one could have gone farther and fared worse.

After calling upon the Commissioner, Colonel Temple, and reporting my arrival officially to the Deputy-Commissioner, Mr. Fox Strangways, I was informed that in addition to my duties as an Assistant Commissioner, I was to act temporarily as Civil Judge of the Station. As my experience of civil work was practically nil, the appointment was one of those ludicrous ones which, from the exigencies of the service, have sometimes to be made. To see me sitting from day to day, with all the dignity of the woolsack, solemnly adjourning cases for reasons valid or invalid, was fit for a place in *Punch*. Fortunately it didn't last long, but how *Truth* or Bottomley would have liked to get hold of it !

As the regiment—the VII Madras Infantry—was

kind enough to make me an honorary member of their mess, I decided to live with them, and later on induced another young and newly joined civilian to do likewise. Williamson was a most amusing youngster, but, like the rest of them on first joining, inclined to be bumptious, and the Colonel of the regiment could never stand the sight of him. His one aim and object was to try and hit something with a gun, and every morning he was out in the surrounding snipe jheels blazing away for all he was worth.

Nothing annoyed the Colonel more than, while on parade, to hear firing in the direction of these jheels, for he well knew that it could be none other than Williamson disturbing what he considered as his own special preserves.

Coming back late to breakfast one morning, Colonel Fenton met Williamson as he was leaving the Mess House, and with withering scorn in his voice and anger at his heart, said to him, "Hulloa, young fellow, been frightening the snipe again, I suppose."

"No, Colonel, I haven't," said Williamson. "You will be glad to hear that they are getting quite accustomed to me now!"

We all roared with laughter, and from that time on the two were friends. But he certainly was the most casual young beggar it was ever my fate to meet. Long afterwards, when Deputy-Commissioner of Chanda, he was sent to me as one of my Assistants, and lived with me in my bungalow. Noticing one morning, as he was sitting beside me at breakfast, that he had round his neck one of my best ties, I said, "Williamson, that is a very pretty tie you are wearing."

“ Yes, Coxon, it is,” he said. “ To tell the truth, my taste in ties depends entirely upon the taste of the man I happen to be living with.”

There was simply no beating him. While he was with me I took three months' privilege leave home to England, leaving him to the care of my successor. Shortly after my departure he followed me home on similar leave, and meeting me one morning in Piccadilly, he at once invited himself to lunch with me at my Club, and during lunch casually informed me that finding the trunks I had left behind in the bungalow a better lot than his own, he had annexed them on loan. I have never seen those trunks again from that day to this. But he was a cheery soul, and he is welcome to them.

May was now on, and things were beginning to frizzle. Anticipating being a fixture at Raipur for years, I suggested one night at mess the formation of a polo club. It was eagerly taken up. The hat went round the next day, and before very long we had the satisfaction of inaugurating one of the best, and certainly the fastest polo ground, to be found in the Central Provinces. One of the keenest in supporting and helping forward the movement was our political agent for the Feudatory States, Mr. Younghusband. He had a nice little stud of ponies, and was in the habit of entertaining the station with gymkhana “ At Homes ” in his grounds, on which occasions he was always very anxious for his side, *i.e.* the civil side, to compete and make a good show against the military. At one of these gymkhanas we had a young civilian who, much to Younghusband's disgust, took up his position on arrival in a long-sleeved chair and remained in

this recumbent attitude for the rest of the afternoon. He looked incapable of any exertion, and his sole object in life for the time being appeared to be that of eating and sleeping. At last Younghusband, losing patience, came to me and said, "We really must try and make this fellow do something, if only for the credit of the Service," and approaching him in his chair, said, "Really, ——, can't you possibly make a move and do something?"

"Thank you, sir," said the youth. "I'll do a small whisky-and-soda!"

In the ordinary course of events I could not expect any promotion for years, and the mere possibility of being called upon to act as Deputy Commissioner never entered my head. Judge then of my astonishment, when one day Colonel Hughes Hallett, the new Commissioner, sent for me and put a telegram into my hand directing him to send me at once to Chanda to take over charge of the District. Practically all my previous service had been on the staff, and the few months' experience as an assistant at Saugor and Raipur was barely sufficient to teach me the rudiments of my work, so that to ask me at a moment's notice to undertake the responsibility of sole executive charge of one of the largest Districts in India was trying me rather high. Adaptability, however, was always one of my few qualifications, and had I been asked to relieve the Viceroy of his duties, I verily believe I would have taken on the job. For it is a great step and a great relief to make that one eventful move in your life which renders you practically independent. And as Deputy Commissioner of a District you are, to all practical purposes, your own boss, and monarch of all you survey.

It took me no time to pack up, and after a farewell dinner at the mess, and bidding good-bye to my newly made friends, I left Raipur never to return to it. On my way through Nagpur, the capital of the Province, I ascertained that my sudden promotion was due to a quite abnormal number of sick casualties, and that it was likely to be of a very temporary character. This was confirmed on my arrival at Chanda, where Mr. Skinner, who was in charge, informed me that he fully expected to be back again to relieve me within, at the outside, six weeks' time. I was Deputy Commissioner of Chanda from that time on for close on six years! And yet I hadn't been there a month before I started asking for trouble.

Finding one day through the police that there were some recruiting agents actively at work enlisting coolies for the tea gardens in Assam, I became troubled in mind, for I knew that we in Chanda required all the population we had. I accordingly sent for one of these gentlemen, and on perusing his certificate and finding that he was only authorised to recruit in the "Central Provinces," and that the District "Chanda" was not specifically mentioned in it, I took the bull by the horns and directed him and his fellow-recruiters to at once release all the coolies they had already secured, and at the same time issued orders to the police to see them safely over the borders of the District within twenty-four hours. They left, as they had to, but at once began to complain of my treatment at headquarters. Various telegrams were then received, first expressing the hope that my action was strictly within the law—of which I was in doubt—

secondly asking for explanations, and finally directing me to report myself without delay at Nagpur.

It was at Nagpur on this occasion that I first met Mr. A. H. L. Fraser, who was at the time Commissioner of the Nagpur Division, and who afterwards became Sir Andrew Fraser and Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. At dinner that evening I suggested that my brief reign at Chanda was at an end and he smilingly assented, so that it was not in a very comfortable frame of mind that I presented myself the next morning for the interview with the head of the Government. I dreaded the worst, but contrary to expectations was received by Sir John Woodburn, K.C.S.I., in the most cordial manner. Pointing to a huge pile of correspondence, he smilingly remarked that he had to thank me for it, and had called me in specially to get my views on the subject. To understand the case it is necessary to remark that the Government of India had authorised certain coolie recruiters to enlist coolies throughout India for work on the tea gardens in Assam. There was no compulsion about it, and the coolies who went made as a rule very good money out of it. But in the Central Provinces, as in other parts of India, there were Districts with a surplus population, and there were again others, amongst which was Chanda, which could ill afford to let a single man go ; and apparently my grounds for giving these recruiters the order of the boot had appealed to Sir John, and had placed before him a case on behalf of the Chanda *ryots*¹ and landlords, which had not hitherto presented itself to him. Instead,

¹ Agriculturists.

therefore, of getting the slating which I expected, I had a long and interesting interview which resulted in my Chief, while slightly discountenancing the somewhat *zubardasti*¹ methods I had adopted with the recruiting agents, thoroughly approving of my interpretation of the orders. In fact he then and there wrote up to the Government of India, suggesting and recommending that, in all future certificates issued, the name of the District should be specifically inserted.

On bidding me good-bye, Sir John, who was the most courteous of men and perhaps the most popular Chief we ever had in the Province, said: "Coxon, we have now discussed work, and though good and necessary in its way, there are other sides of life in India which have to be considered. I have recently made an extended tour through the Province, and find that while at Saugor you were instrumental in restarting the old Saugor racquet court, at Raipur it was chiefly through your exertions the new polo ground was made. Both of these games have my very hearty approval, and as Chief Commissioner of the Province I tender you my thanks for what you have done."

The Deputy Commissioner of Chanda left Nagpur that evening feeling several inches taller, and with the conviction that, given a little luck, he might yet "muddle through" for the few remaining weeks of his officiating appointment!

Weeks and months went by, and I had at last to realise that I was face to face with the biggest thing I had yet

¹ High-handed.

taken on. Entirely by myself, and practically without previous training, here I was, either to get on or get out. The love of the independent command so dear to the sailor was in me, and I registered an inward vow that I would never again take up a subordinate position, if by my own exertions it could be avoided.

CHAPTER XX

The District of Chanda—A woman's view of camp life in India, written by my wife—My dear old butler Peter—I bag my first tiger—Taroba—A very peculiar petition presented to me by a wild man of the woods

A SHORT description of the locality and size of my new charge might be of use in illustrating the difficulties I had to contend with. The District of Chanda is the most southerly District of the Central Provinces. Its main body is roughly triangular in shape, its north boundary forming the base of a triangle which gradually tapers towards its apex in the south. South of this main body, and completely separated from it by a stretch of foreign territory some fifteen miles in length, lies a tract of 593 square miles known as the *Lower Taluqs* of Sironcha, which forms a kind of pendant to the rest of the District. It forms part of the Nagpur Division, and is bounded on the north by the Wardha, Nagpur, and Bhandara Districts of the Division, on the west by the Yeotmal District and the territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and on the east by the Feudatory States of Kanker and Bastar and the Drug District of Chattisgarh.

Some idea of the unwieldy size of the District may be obtained from the following measurements :

From either the north-west or the north-east corner of the District to the confluence of the Godavari and Indravati rivers, which forms the apex of the main body

of the District, the distance is as the crow flies 150 miles. From the latter point to the southernmost point of the Lower Taluqs of Sironcha is an additional 66 miles. From east to west the greatest breadth is in the extreme north, and the distance is almost 120 miles as the crow flies. The total area of the District exceeds that of Wales by one-third, and is larger than the combined areas of Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berks, Bucks, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, and Middlesex.

From the above it will be seen that it was a somewhat heavy charge, and yet I look back to the six years I had in Chanda as the most interesting period of my service. Hard, and at times monotonous the life certainly was, and during the hot weather which lasts from early March until the end of July, when the thermometer was anything between 110° and 125° in the shade, it was trying in the extreme.

Towards the end of July, when one is anxiously awaiting the arrival of the ever-welcome burst of the monsoon, you literally gasp for breath. Every door and window has to be tightly closed, the light excluded from the rooms each morning by 7.30, and kept so until late in the evening, while the swish of the punkah never ceases. Then the monsoon bursts, and of a sudden, as in a transformation scene, everything which was parched and yellow and horrid becomes in a night bright and green and cheerful. Doors are flung open and you rush out, dressed as you are, to get the first cool bath you have had since the hot weather set in. And yet in a short time how sick and weary you get of that never-ceasing downpour, bringing with it as it does the pest of flies,

white ants, snakes and scorpions, and, worse still, fever and malaria. For say what you will of the discomfort of the hot weather, it is undoubtedly the healthiest time of the year in the shiny East. At last the rains cease some time in September, and you at once set about arranging your plans for the cold-weather camping season, when the joy-time of every Anglo-Indian commences.

And to convey some idea of this side of Indian life, from a woman's point of view, I may perhaps be permitted to insert here a letter written by my wife on the subject to the Australian newspapers shortly after we were married :

“As there are few Australian women who have had experience of camp life in India, the following sketch of a Victorian may be of interest. We always make the most of our few months' cold weather, and with short intervals at headquarters, where my husband is bound to return from time to time, we are under canvas from early October to the end of February. Our tents and provisions travel by a long string of camels tied head to tail, and a number of carts drawn by very small bullocks, and our cavalcade, consisting as it does of a whole army of servants, including cooks, *khitmagars*,¹ *bhistis*,² *dhobis*,³ even down to one's own travelling *derzi*,⁴ makes an imposing spectacle. Then to this must be added our walking commissariat, which has to be slowly driven along from camp to camp. There are our cows and goats for milk and butter, sheep, frequently fowls and ducks, together with all the home pets such as spare horses,

¹ Table servants.

³ Washermen.

² Water carriers.

⁴ Tailor.



ONE OF OUR CAMPS IN CHANDA

Photo. by Author



dogs, an Australian cockatoo, a family of cats, a tame bear and a pet panther—the whole in charge of a police guard, making a weird and wonderful menagerie. It must be borne in mind that they have to be taken, for when you leave the Station you shut up the house with only a *chowkidar*¹ in charge.

“The daily march varies from ten to fifteen miles, and while my husband and I ride, my European nurse and child travel either on an elephant or in a bullock tonga. The jungle at this time of the year looks its best, as the young bamboo is just sprouting in lovely feathery masses of tender green. Sometimes we pass sprays of mauve and yellow orchids, and then perhaps a mile or two of wild gardenias, with an almost too-powerful scent. They are just like the cultivated flower, though the blossom is perhaps whiter and larger. Our tent accommodation is luxurious, and consists of two large single-poled tents, 30 feet by 25 feet, with partitions to form separate rooms if required, one large *shamiana*, three servants’ tents, and another for the police guard. All these are supplied by the Government, but so as to be still more comfortable and to be able if need be to put up guests, we generally take three or more white houses of our own in the shape of Swiss cottages. The larger tents are used as sitting and bedrooms, and the *shamiana* forms our dining-room as well as my husband’s court-house and office. As a rule, however, we dine in the open, and the after-dinner smoke round the log fire, when the men discuss the sporting events of the day, is perhaps the most enjoyable hour of the twenty-four. All the tents with

¹ Watchman,

the exception of the *shamiana* are double-fly, and the larger ones, with fully four feet space for ventilation, are cool even in the hottest weather, and form a delightful verandah where I often sit and sew. Immediately after dinner the *shamiana* is struck, and this with half the sleeping accommodation and servants are on the line of march before midnight, so as to be ready for us with hot baths and breakfast the following morning at the next halting-place. We are up by 6 A.M. and in the saddle before seven, and with a *sowar*,¹ and a couple of *shikaris* carrying guns and rifles, we proceed on our way. Duck, snipe, teal, partridge, and sandgrouse abound, and we trust entirely to these to give a variety to the menu, while a long shot with the rifle often brings a welcome addition to the larder in the shape of a black buck, the venison of India. Talking of commissariat and domestics, and knowing full well the servant trouble in Australia, I think I must chance exciting the envy of my friends by giving a description of my boys and their wages, and how a dinner can be served in an Indian camp.

“ To begin with, my head cook, a smart little Goanese always scrupulously clean in his snow-white clothes, gets £24 a year, out of which he provides his own assistant and feeds himself. In camp he chooses a spot of ground about a hundred yards from the dining-tent near some suitable trees, round the trunks of which he ties large sheets of grass matting to shield the fires from draught. The fireplaces are holes in the ground filled with charcoal, on which the pots rest. His oven is very quaint, merely an iron box on legs, but out of which he produces the best

¹ Mounted orderly.



Photo by Tucker

THE DHOIE AT WORK IN CAMP, CHANDA



puff-paste, bread, and scones I have ever tasted. Numerous other weird contrivances help to furnish the travelling kitchen, and though so constantly moving, our meals are as well cooked and consist of as many courses as in our bungalow at Chanda. At my first attempt at camp house-keeping I used to order less to try and save the boys ; but I soon found this to be a mistake, as they invariably take more trouble and interest when a full-course dinner is expected.

“ We have *chota hazri* ¹ at 6.30, full déjeuner any time between 11 and 12.30, tea at 4 P.M., and dinner at 8. Our *dhobi* is a perfect washerman, and gets £9 per annum, while the *derzi* draws a shilling a day and finds his own sewing machine. He works from 11 to 6.30 P.M. without a break, is always under my eye on the verandah, and, given a copy, will make perfectly anything from a simple blouse to a ball dress. Before ending this chapter of domestic affairs I must not forget my indispensable factotum in the person of ‘ Peter the butler,’ for I cannot speak too highly of this wonderful little man. As a matter of fact he was with my husband for seven years before we were married, and when I went on a globe-trotting tour to India in my bachelor days, it was Peter who was deputed to meet me at Colombo and act as my personal attendant during the whole of my visit. So you see we were as a matter of fact old friends when I eventually became his Mem-Sahib. As butler he arranges everything, buys everything, and is responsible for everything, and though no doubt he makes a tiny commission for himself on everything that passes through his hands, this is

¹ Early tea.

only the *dustoor*¹ of the country, and he takes good care that nobody else cheats you. He is head of all the other servants, and if anything goes wrong it is Peter who is hauled over the coals. In addition he has charge of all the wines, stores, fodder, and food for the animals, and his wages are £15 a year !

“The trials of a Mem-Sahib may be many, but the servant question is certainly not one of them, and India would be a haven of rest to many a worried and worn-out Australian housekeeper.”

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Yes, Peter was one of the old type of Indian servant now, alas ! becoming gradually extinct. It was a sad day for us when at home on furlough we heard of the poor old fellow's somewhat sudden death. Being a Madrassi he could—like all Madrassis—talk a certain amount of English, an accomplishment which was invaluable to my wife both as Miss Bird the globe-trotter and later on when she became mistress of my household. It is, however, an accomplishment not unaccompanied with drawbacks, as the following story will serve to prove. We were having a large luncheon party one day. When at dessert a *papaia*, a sort of Indian melon, was put on the table for the first time. Well-iced it is a nice fruit, and my wife with the other ladies present took quite a fancy to it. But sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, thought Peter, and when he was called upon to give her a third slice he took it to her, and in an extremely audible voice said, “Mem-Sahib, no eating any more, this fruit give Mem-Sahib belly-ache !” And talking of Peter reminds me of a character-

¹ Custom,

istic peculiar to all uneducated natives, viz. their inability to appreciate a photograph or what it represents. Even Peter, who had been a Sahib's servant from a youth up, was no exception to this rule. Going out one day on inspection duty I left word with him to have my bungalow office thoroughly spring-cleaned. All round the walls of this room there was a collection of photographs of celebrated racing yachts, and others in which I had myself cruised. I returned to find them all, or most of them, sailing round the room upside down. But there is even a worse one against Peter than this. Knowing my fiancée was extremely partial to dogs, I had a miniature made of my old pal "Bully," the head of my clan of bull-terriers, all of whose names began with the same letter, B. It was just back from the jewellers in Calcutta, where it had been suitably mounted as a brooch and pendant. As Peter was in the room at the time, I handed it to him, asking him that he thought of it. He said "fine." Noticing a sort of inane smile on his face, I said, "What is it, Peter?" He replied, "Very fine picture Missy-Sahib!!"

As an Assistant I had no opportunity for big-game shooting, but being now my own boss it was up to me to do as little or as much as I chose, and it was during my first tour as Deputy Commissioner of Chanda that I bagged the first and the finest tiger I ever shot. There will be occasion later on to discuss this form of sport, so let it suffice to say now that the day I sat on my first tiger and stroked his beautiful head I felt a happy and contented man. When on tour one has shooting of sorts practically every day on the line of march. And just to

show what a wonderful shooting centre the District of Chanda was in my time, I may mention one evening's sport I had in company with my shikari Jingru. We were at the time encamped at a place called Taroba, overlooking a large lake of that name, the whole area of which formed what is called a "special Government Forest Reserve," over which no one, with the exception of the Deputy Commissioner and the Forest Divisional Officer, had the right to shoot, and these only very sparingly. I have sat in company with my wife in the evening on the banks of this lake, and seen on the opposite side of the water every denizen of the jungle coming down for his evening drink, including tiger, panther, bear, deer of all sorts, monkeys, pigs, &c., &c., Going out one afternoon, for a stroll with Jingru, my bag between 5.30 and 7 consisted of a couple of very fine bears, a 41-inch sambhur stag, and a shot at a panther which I missed. Not bad for one evening's amusement! But Toroba is celebrated for more than its game alone, and it has quite a history of its own. There is no village within miles of it; and sitting there on the banks of the lake in the evening, with nothing but the calls of the wild beasts and birds to charm you, you could imagine yourself in the garden of Eden. It is a perfectly beautiful spot, only made vile by the presence of man, in the shape of a Brahman priest in charge of a very sacred temple, to which annually all the barren women resorted from hundreds of miles around for the purpose of being blessed with children. Its fame amongst the female population is widespread, and many a woman has by casting herself at the feet of this sacred shrine had



A CHANDA TIGER



her wish gratified by becoming a mother. I suppose it is only natural, however, to find that this miracle was wrought in the case of the younger and prettier women. Cunning old Brahman ! It must, however, be borne in mind that when in camp in the winter one is not on a shooting tour, and there is a vast amount of work to get through. For the chief object of the head of a District on tour is to get to know the people living in the interior, and to inquire into their many and varied conditions of life. Every village one passes through has to be inspected, and field boundary disputes, which are innumerable, have to be seen to and, if possible, settled on the spot. A *Zillah Sahib*, as the Deputy Commissioner is always called by the natives, has to be constantly dismounting to discuss local affairs with people who have travelled perhaps miles for the express purpose of meeting him. So that when I talk of a ten-mile morning march, it must be remembered that it often took me perhaps six hours to accomplish. The further you penetrate into the wilds and jungles of India, the better you can realise the wonderful problem of our administration of this great country. And of all Districts in the Central Provinces, Chanda, isolated as it is from the outer world by the absence of railways or even of good roads, is perhaps one of the best to appreciate the vast difference which exists between the Indian peasant as he is seen here and the people of the towns with whom the globe-trotter comes in contact, and forms his pig-headed opinion regarding the untrustworthiness of the British officer and the general misgovernment of the country. In Nagpur, the capital of the Province and the

seat of government, sedition, disloyalty, and general unrest are rampant. In the town of Chanda these conditions obtain in a modified form, but in the interior, where the so-called "entrance fails" are unknown, the people still look to the Government as their *Ma-Bap* (literally father and mother), and their *Ma-Bap* is focussed and centred in the person of their *Zillah Sahib*. For they know no other, and a Deputy Commissioner touring in his own District is to them a far greater personage than the Viceroy himself—the one being a real live person and the other a distant myth.

Not a day passes that villagers are not met with on the roadside, each standing on one leg—the usual mark of respect—holding his petition in one hand either for the redress of a grievance, real or imaginary, or perchance for a loan of money from the Government wherewith to purchase seed or cattle. Many and varied indeed are these petitions, and the childlike simplicity of the wild men of the woods was well illustrated on one occasion when, far in the interior, a man presented me with one to the effect that his wife, to whom he had been married for a number of years, had failed to provide him with a male child, and asking me to do the needful!

CHAPTER XXI

The Court of Wards—The Zamindar of Koracha—My two tame tiger cubs—My Barons of Chanda—Their gift to the Queen-Empress—A trip to Sironcha—The death of the man-eating crocodile—Gems of procedure and of English literature

WE have in India what is termed a Court of Wards Act, under which any important estate—for specific reasons, such as the minority of the heir, indebtedness or the inability of the landlord to administer his property—can be taken over and administered by the Government until such time as it can be again safely returned to the owner.

In Chanda we had no less than twenty of these estates belonging to the *Zamindars* or Barons of Chanda, containing an area of some 4800 square miles, and one of my first duties was to take over three of them, consisting of the Ambargarh Chouki, Panabaras, and Koracha *Zamindaris*, and as in order to reach these estates I had to travel right through the *Zamindari* tract, which was the best shooting-ground in the District, I looked forward to the march with considerable pleasure. The first estate to tackle was that of Koracha, the head of which was, to put it mildly, a drunken and disreputable old gentleman who had brought all his trouble on himself. On arrival I found a number of claimants against the estate, consisting chiefly of *Banias*¹ from Nagpur, who

¹ Merchants or money-lenders,

were out for blood and demanding that the *Zamindar* should be at once arrested and taken to Nagpur, where they felt confident they would be able to bleed him to their hearts' content. But disreputable as the old Gond gentleman was, he was one of my Barons and came of a good old stock, and I was determined, if possible, to save him from any such indignity. The case was clear against him. The *Banias* knew this, and they came prepared to pay down the usual diet money for his journey to Nagpur. The difference between us, however, was, that while they were only prepared to treat him as an ordinary person for whom the diet money would be a few annas per day, I elected to rank him as a *Zamindar*, allowed him a full retinue of retainers, fixed his allowance at Rs. 30 per day, and gave him twenty days to make the journey—knowing full well that the money demanded would not be forthcoming. The claimants asked for an adjournment of the court to arrange things. The *Zamindar*, who was no fool, made a similar request, and the adjournment for a few hours was granted. Once outside the court the old autocrat soon asserted himself, and supreme in his own estate, he simply forbade any of his people to advance a sou. The *Banias* were foiled, he escaped arrest, and his property was saved. Gangsha Bapu never forgot me for that little manœuvre. He was deeply grateful, and the downfall of the *Banias* was a source of rejoicing throughout the estate. The estate was eventually taken over by Government, and the creditors in time paid off, though without the extortionate interest they would have obtained from the *Zamindar* had he been left to his own devices.



A CHANDA BISON

Photo. by Author

I had some excellent sport during this tour, and while out early one morning, tracking a herd of bison, came across a Gond who had just succeeded in robbing a tigress of her two cubs. They were the sweetest little things imaginable, and eventually became the greatest of pets, my *shikari* Jingru assuring me that if I gave them over to him he would be able to rear them. We made the wild man's fortune by presenting him with a sum of Rs. 25, and at the same time concluded the best bargain I ever made in my life. Until I was able to get Jingru a child's feeding-bottle from Bombay he used a piece of rag dipped in milk to feed them with, but when the bottle came the kittens at once concluded that their mother had returned home again, and there was no further trouble. Some eight months after these same cubs were sold to a firm in Bombay for one thousand rupees, and for all I know to the contrary they may now be on view at the London Zoo. In the meantime they were a never-ending source of enjoyment, and one of the sights of Chanda was to see the Deputy Commissioner going out for his early morning ride accompanied by his bobbery pack of hounds and his two tame tigers. They would scamper along the road, playing with the dogs for just as far as they liked, which was never very far, and then turn and trot back home in charge of their keeper. In the Chanda compound we had a monkey chained to a long pole, and an amusing half-hour could always be spent watching the cubs, when they were first let out, stalking this monkey. It was a regular Sunday morning function, and caused the greatest amusement, as the monkey invariably entered into the game. He would wait sitting on the ground, watching

his stalkers and at the same time bluffing them by pretending not to see them. With his eyes in the air, and scratching his ear with his hind leg, he would look as if such a thing as a tiger did not exist on the face of the earth. Then suddenly, as one or other of the cubs made his spring, up the pole would go that monkey like a flash of greased lightning, and, while the tiger was wondering what the devil had become of his prey, down he would come in the middle of his back, and, biting a huge piece of fluff out of him, up again he would fly with a loud cackle of delight. There was much distress in the compound when those tigers had to go. As they get on, you must—to keep them fit—feed them with raw meat, and once they taste that their natures appear to change. Directly I got up in the mornings I used to go out and see them, and when, as they rubbed their sides as usual up against my legs, I found them playfully testing the thickness of my calf with their teeth, I decided that discretion must overrule friendship.

We eventually took over the two other Zamindaris of Ambargarh Chouki and Panabaras, the first on account of the minority of the heir, and the second as there was only a woman to administer the estate, and both turned out to be very prosperous properties. While in this portion of the District I made a point of visiting all the other Zamindari estates, and it is with some pride I am able to add that as a result of this tour my twenty Barons of Chanda subscribed together, and in the following year sent Her Majesty, the late Queen-Empress, a handsome silver casket in honour of her Diamond Jubilee. It contained an illuminated address assuring Her Majesty of their

continued devotion and loyalty, and expressed the hope that she might still live long to reign over them. With the funds so collected we were able to present each donor with a framed photograph of the casket, together with a copy of the letter of thanks received from Her Majesty's private secretary. This is a treasure which is to be seen to this day in each of their baronial halls.

For administrative purposes the District of Chanda was divided into four large divisions called Tahsils, with a Tahsildar, or native magistrate, in charge of each. These four Tahsils were designated respectively the Chanda or headquarter Tahsil, Warora, Brahmapuri, and Sironcha. The total area of the District was, in my day—for it has been considerably curtailed since—10,749 square miles, with a population of something under a million souls. There was no railway, and but one metalled road, and with a perfect network of rivers and streams crossing the District in every direction, it may readily be inferred that one toured under considerable difficulties. The distance from Chanda to Sironcha, with only a rough bullock-track connecting the two places, was roughly 150 miles, and it was to Sironcha that I was deputed to make my next cold-weather tour. For some years, owing to pressure of work, no Deputy Commissioner had been able to visit the Sironcha Tahsil, and the consequence was that a number of anonymous as well as signed petitions had been received regarding the conduct of the Tahsildar, and so serious were some of the allegations against him that I was ordered to proceed there as soon as I possibly could to investigate the charges on the spot. The journey took me some ten days, and I had excellent sport on the way.

On the day after my arrival at Sironcha the investigation commenced. I could see at once that the Tahsildar was a man of a highly-strung temperament, and though his cross-examination of his accusers was clever and to the point, the whole time he was in court he was suffering acutely from nervous strain. The inquiry extended over a week; and though in the end I was able to record an order completely exonerating him from all the graver charges, the ordeal proved too much for him, and on my shaking him by the hand and publicly congratulating him on his reinstatement, the poor fellow fell down in the court in a swoon from which he never recovered. His brain had given way. I had him carefully nursed for some days, but finding no improvement, and being out of the reach of medical advice, I at last summoned his relatives from Madras to escort him home, where he remained partially insane for the rest of his life. It was a sad ending to a very wicked conspiracy. My only consolation is that the Tahsildar's traducers lived to rue the day they had slandered him. They were duly prosecuted, and a number of them were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for perjury.

When of an evening I used to go round to inquire after the poor fellow, I frequently heard him calling out "Venkomar ! Venkomar !" On inquiry I ascertained that this was the name of his favourite daughter, and I vowed that if ever I was lucky enough to possess a yacht (I am passionately fond of yachting) I should name her after my Tahsildar's daughter. The *Venkomar* would, I think, make a particularly pretty name for a schooner yacht.



Photo, by Author's wife

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DUCK-SHOOTING IN CHANDA



The situation of my camp at Sironcha was a perfectly beautiful one, for it was placed on a spot immediately above where the two magnificent rivers, the Godavari and the Pranhita, join forces.

Alligators of great size abound in both rivers, and as I had never yet shot one I made up my mind not to leave the place without adding one to my collection of trophies. Each evening after court found me at the river-side with my rifle, waiting in vain for a shot, for though there were numbers of them about, it is next to useless to shoot unless you can get a shot in at one or other of the two vital spots, viz. behind the shoulder or between the eyes. At last one evening, finding a magnificent fellow basking in the sunshine on the top of the water, we resorted to stratagem. Going into the village my *shikari* secured a couple of young puppies and tied them to a stake at the water's edge. Catching sight of the monster and being frightened out of their lives, they started yelling and barking, which, as Jingru had surmised, immediately attracted the attention of our floating friend. Slowly but surely in he came, until he actually landed his ugly snout within a yard of the now completely petrified pups. Whether he was suspicious of his environment, or whether he was merely waiting till dusk to enjoy his savoury meal, it is difficult to say, but not another move did that brute make until at last, despairing of getting the shoulder shot for which I had been so patiently waiting for over two hours, I drew a bead and blazed at him right between the eyes. A huge white cavern of a mouth suddenly opened and shut, and rushing down the bank lest mine enemy should crawl into deep water and escape me, I fired my second barrel when

his head was literally between my legs, and in my excitement missed him by a yard ! Fortunately the first shot was sufficient. It had killed him stone dead, and my much coveted trophy was won. Sending for some coolies, we had the carcass safely landed on the bank, and returned to camp. The following morning, being awakened shortly after daylight by the most infernal din outside my sleeping-tent, I got up to ascertain the cause and found a huge concourse of people in a state of the greatest excitement. And well they might be. It is really difficult to relate what follows without running the risk of being called names. On cutting the alligator open the remains of a woman were found inside him, and one of the men engaged on the job was the woman's husband ! There could be no doubt about it ; he identified the remains and claimed them as his property, and there were a number of his villagers present to corroborate his statement. In order to place this most interesting incident beyond the region of doubt I sent the whole lot of them off there and then to make good their claim in a court of law. The result of the inquiry was to amply bear out that the claimant was actually the husband of the deceased woman, and so interesting was the whole case that I had a copy of the proceedings, together with a brief report of my own, published in the *Pioneer*, the chief daily newspaper of India. The following is a verbatim copy of the report :

To the Editor.

SIR,—We have all heard wonderful stories of the weird assortment of things found in the stomachs of sharks, but the following authentic statement recorded on

oath by a magistrate may prove of interest to your readers. The incident occurred at Sironcha, the headquarters of the Sironcha *Tahsil* in this district, situated on the left bank of the Pranhitar River, two miles above its junction with the Godavari. The *Magar*¹ shot measured just over 12 feet, and in addition to the articles identified by the husband of the deceased woman, it contained the following :

One brass bullock's call-bell, one large fish-hook with a quantity of line, several pieces of flat hoop iron, a tangled mass of black hair, and from three to four pounds of large pebbles, the last apparently for purposes of digestion.

(Signed) STANLEY W. COXON,
Deputy Commissioner.

CHANDA, C.P.

CAMP SIRONCHA, *March 14, 1896.*

Statement of B. Chinnodu, mason, whose wife was drowned in the river, February 23, 1896, states on solemn affirmation :

“ I am the husband of the woman by name Zellai, the daughter of Sangarti Porhetti who is a resident of Nagpur. On the 23rd February last (Sunday) at about 4 P.M. she went to the river for the purpose of washing her clothes but she has never returned. I was informed that while washing her clothes at the *ghat* she lost her foothold and was drowned. I have not seen her since that date. I recognise amongst the articles found in the stomach of the alligator shot on the 18th inst. by the Deputy Commissioner the following as the property of my wife : 1 choli or jacket, 2 silver bangles, 1 other ditto, 1 silver ring. I

Crocodile.

claim them as my property. I believe the bones shown to me to be those of a human being. The bell shown to me does not belong to me but it is called in Telegu *gun-guralu*, and is tied to the bullock's neck in these parts."

(Signed) C. D. RANGABASHIM,

Nail Tahsildar and 2nd class Magistrate.

Note.—Other corroborative evidence of eye-witnesses was recorded.

On Mr. B. Chimmodu returning to me from the Magistrates' Court after making good his claim, I of course admitted his right to the ownership of the remains, but finding that all he required was a few bones with which to perform the funeral rites of his caste, I purchased the rest of the articles from him and have them with me to this day. The alligator itself, being too big to bring home to England, was left as a souvenir of the event in the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner of Chanda.

One of the most important duties of a District Magistrate while halting at a *Tahsili* headquarters is the thorough inspection of the working of the *Tahsili* courts and offices, and it is seldom that while so employed he does not garner some gems either in the shape of procedure or quaint expressions of the English language on the part of his English-speaking subordinate native magistrates. I can remember finding two such curiosities at Sironcha, both in the court of the late Tahsildar. In the first he was trying a man for an attempt to commit suicide. Now everyone knows that this is the one offence in the penal code for an attempt at which you can be punished, and for the commission of which you are no longer amenable

to the law. In the present case the unfortunate man died while undergoing his trial. Here was something up against the presiding magistrate for which he could find no precedent, so he solemnly proceeded to find the accused guilty of the offence of committing suicide, and convicted and sentenced him according to law !

In the second case a lovely example of the fondness of the English-speaking native for high-flown phraseology was unearthed. The accused—a man—was being prosecuted for an assault upon a woman with intent to outrage her modesty. The case was quite properly tried and the man rightly convicted and punished, but in recording his judgment the Tahsildar gave way to his feelings and allowed his pen to run away with him. He said :

“ The present case is one which requires the highest punishment which the law allows me to inflict, not only as a punishment on the inhuman fiend brought before me, but as an almighty deterrent on other similar bestial sons of Belial who roam the world through like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour, and who care not what to-morrow may bring forth so long as their amorous passions can be quenched. Here we have in the person of the accused a lusty, strong-minded son of toil of some thirty-two summers brutally and violently assaulting the complainant, totally without solicitation, and whose crime is increased one hundred thousandfold by the fact that she—the complainant—is an ugly old hack without any sign of flirting ! ”

It reminds me, in its peculiar phraseology, of a petition I once saw from a man who had been dismissed from his employment as a worker in a jute mill in Bengal. After

pouring forth all his grievances and troubles he ended his petition to the superintendent in the following words :

“ Day and night have I wandered amongst the fields and by-lanes seeking employment without finding any, for still my enemies persecute me, and I now look to you, my master, for succour, for you are my Lord God Almighty and I am your poor little beggar, CHUNI LAL.”

On the land Revenue side we have in India what we term Revenue inspectors, in charge of circles containing a number of subordinate officials called *Patwaris*, whose duty it is to furnish all the particulars of the villages relating to land and crops in his particular circle. Finding one of these inspectors somewhat dilatory in his movements, I wrote across his diary that what was wanted was more inspection of his *Patwaris* work and less writing. His reply was to the effect that “ he was only a humble slave, that he had worked hard from dewy morn to dusty eve without obtaining his lordship’s approval, but that he would now at once proceed again on tour to ‘ turn ’ the tails of the *Patwaris* ! ”



Photo. by Author

MY THREE GOND SKIKARIS



CHAPTER XXII

Partial failure of the rain causes scarcity of food crops—The Nagpur Grain Riots—Children's kitchens in Chanda—How they were suddenly emptied by means of a lying rumour

IN the year '96-97 the rains, upon which the very safety of the people in India depends, partially failed, and in the northern portion of the Province, including such places as Jubbulpore, Saugor, Damoh, and other Districts, the gaunt spectre of famine was stalking its cruel way, desolating the villages wholesale. It must, I fear, be admitted that in this first famine the Government failed to realise its responsibility in time, and the death-rate from starvation was a serious blot on the administration. Instead of grasping the naked truth boldly in the first instance, efforts were made to minimise the danger, and deaths which were in reality due to acute distress, if not to actual starvation, were reported as attributable to other causes. Scarcity of food cannot be trifled with anywhere, and in the interior of India, where the distances are so enormous, every day's delay in supplying the deficit makes the danger infinitely more difficult to grapple with. We in the south, including Chanda, were better off in the matter of rain, and had secured a little over half a normal crop, but the large exports of grain for the relief of the distressed area involved a gradual tightening in the prices of food grains which, as the season advanced, necessitated a

careful watch being maintained over the condition of the poorer classes. Eventually it was found necessary to start two small relief works in the northern or Zamin-dari portion of the District, and later on kitchens were opened in a number of places for the purpose of providing a free meal once a day to the children of necessitous parents. A certain amount of gratuitous relief amongst the villages also became necessary, but what with this and various other remedial measures, such as large loans by the Government and advances from the Charitable Relief Fund, we were able to pull through without recourse to further famine operations. The District was certainly distressed but not famine-stricken. About this time, when the kitchens were being opened and the numbers of children in them gradually swelling, I was summoned into Nagpur to attend a conference. Here also the food difficulty was giving serious cause for thought, and the turbulent portion of the community in the town of Nagpur had openly threatened the *Banias*, or merchants, with reprisals. As luck would have it, they broke into open revolt while I was there. It happened on a Sunday afternoon when, while enjoying a siesta in the hospitable home of my Commissioner, Mr. Fraser came in and, waking me, asked me if I would accompany him to the city, whence news had just reached him that the people were up and serious rioting was taking place.

Sir Andrew Fraser has since his retirement written a most interesting book of his experiences in India. It is called *Amongst Indian Rajahs and Ryots*, and as he has given in this book an account of the "Nagpur Grain

Riots " I am sure he will forgive me for quoting a portion of it here. He says :

"Meanwhile at 3.30 P.M. a messenger had come to me from Mr. Chitnaris with a hurried note saying that there were crowds of discontented and riotous persons led by *lathiyals*¹ threatening to plunder the town, and that his own house was in danger. At the same time several grain merchants from the town drove at express speed into my compound with the information that the city people had risen against the merchants. At that moment I was talking to Mr. Coxon, Deputy Commissioner of Chanda, and Mr. Mitchell, Inspector of Schools, who were in Nagpur at a conference, and were staying at my house. They offered to come with me to the city, which was about two miles distant. We started as soon as my waggonette could be got ready, for only two of my horses had returned from camp. On the way we met Chuni Lal (the agent of Rai Bahadur Bansilal Abirchand, the great Kamptee banker) in a pony tonga, Seth Agyaram's messenger in a carriage, and several other terrified merchants, who told us that the shops in new *Shukrawari* Bazaar were being broken into, and that the police had fled, and that the whole of that part of the city was in the hands of a mob led by *lathiyals* and *badmashes*.² This bazaar is the richest in Nagpur and contains the business residences of some of the most important money-lenders and grain dealers. It was evident that there was a rising of some importance in the city.

¹ *Lathiyāl* is a man armed with a club, generally a professional ruffian.

² *Badmash* is a bad character.

"I turned into the Bank of Bengal, which we were just passing. It lies at the foot of the hill on which the Sitabaldi Fort stands, and about half a mile from the Commissioner's old house, and between it and the city. There I wrote a note to Lieutenant Jeffcoat, in command of the detachment of Madras Infantry, to send down men to my assistance at once. We then drove on to the city as fast as we could, leaving the troops to follow. At the end of the new Shukrwari road, as we entered the city by the *Juma Darwaza*,¹ soon after 4 P.M., we found a small body of about twelve or sixteen unarmed Indian police huddled together in terror. The road was crowded with a vast concourse of people, among whom could be seen men armed with *lathis*.² I inquired where the Deputy Commissioner was, and was informed that he was with the District Superintendent of Police in the *Itwari*³ Bazaar dealing with a similar rising there. I left a note with one constable for Lieutenant Jeffcoat, asking him to send half of his men to the Deputy Commissioner, and half into the Shukrwari Bazaar after me. I then shouted to the police, so that many of the people heard me, informing them that the military were on their way to the city, and ordering them to form up behind me and follow my carriage at the double. I drove my carriage at full speed down the street to where the shops had been broken into and were being plundered. The crowd, in a somewhat friendly manner, opened out before us. Many of

¹ *Juma* meaning Friday; *Darwaza*, gate.

² *Lāthi* is a heavy club often mounted and weighted with metal.

³ *Itwar* is Sunday. The bazaar is usually named after the day on which it is held.

them recognised me and saluted quite respectfully, even some of those who were carrying away little bundles of grain. Meeting with no resistance, we were soon at the grain merchants' quarter. We found the shops broken open, the doors even smashed off their hinges, the rioters in undisputed possession, and some of the shops completely plundered. The work of spoliation was making rapid progress when we arrived. The rioters thought that we had a large force behind us, for the information I had given to the police spread like wildfire. We leaped from the carriage and rushed into several shops which were entirely in the hands of the looters. Wherever we appeared panic seized them. We knocked down a number of the ringleaders, tied them up in their own *pagaris*,¹ and deposited them in the strong-room of a shop, in custody of some of the police until assistance should arrive. The noise in the street prevented people in one shop knowing what was being done in another, and we had forty or fifty prisoners by the time assistance came. At least one half of these were ringleaders armed with lathis, and carrying not grain, but bullion and jewels as their booty. All of them were strong well-nourished men. By this time we had emptied the shops of the looters and closed them, and were proceeding to clear the street.

“Meanwhile, Mr. Stuart, who had been sent by the Deputy Commissioner to this Bazaar, arrived. We made over charge of the prisoners to him, and as there had been no signs of organised resistance we determined to leave him there and push on to the help of the Deputy Commissioner. As soon, however, as we had turned to go, a

¹ *Pagari* is a long cloth wound round the head, a turban.

determined attack was made by the street rioters on the District Superintendent. We fortunately heard the alarm and turned back. We fastened the prisoners to each other by their own head-dresses and by ropes, and then fastened the foremost of them to the carriage. We directed about half a dozen of the small force of Reserve Police to remain as a guard in Shukrwari, and the rest (about six men) to follow close behind the prisoners with fixed bayonets and loaded rifles; and in this order we drove off to the *Kotwali*.¹ The crowd opened up to make way for my waggonette and the strange procession of prisoners, whom the waggonette in front and the armed police behind kept at a smart trot all the way.

“The Kotwali was not far from the Shukrwari Bazaar, and we soon deposited our prisoners in the cells, from whence they were removed the next day to the central jail under charge of a military escort. By this time it was about 5 P.M., and the men of the Madras Infantry, who had started with great promptitude, under Lieutenant Jeffcoat, joined us here. While we were putting our prisoners in the cells we received news that a mob led by lathiyals was marching on Mr. Chitnavi’s house. We left some of the Madras Infantry to guard the Kotwali, and took as many as we could (about a dozen) in my waggonette. I requested Lieutenant Jeffcoat, meanwhile, to march directly to the relief of the Deputy Commissioner. We drove off straight to the Shukrwari Bazaar as fast as my horses could gallop. The sight of the Sepoys with us was, however, quite enough, and we only saw the mob disperse and the lathiyals vanish.

¹ Chief police station.



F. C. C. & Co.

A CHANDA PANTHER



“ We left a few of our men as a guard at Mr. Chitnavi's house and went the shortest way to the Itwari Bazaar. We found that organised looting had started there, about half an hour before our arrival. The Deputy Commissioner had not sufficient force to prevent it throughout the Bazaar, though he had kept the peace at the part where he was. While he kept the peace in one place the plunderers were at work in another. The leaders were armed with lathis and housebreaking instruments, but only a few shops had been opened. We passed into the Bazaar just ahead of Lieutenant Jeffcoat and his men. We formed up all together, rushed the Bazaar, and arrested some ringleaders. The police, seeing that they had European officers with them and that the troops were close behind, soon quelled the disturbance without any bloodshed.

“ There was, however, a grave risk that the rioters, whose defeat had been due to panic, might rally and give very serious trouble. No one who has seen the large bodies of men armed with lathis, who were the main agents in the disturbances, or the sympathetic attitude assumed for the most part by the crowd, could have doubted that the danger was decidedly serious. We therefore asked Lieutenant Jeffcoat to send as many men as he could spare of the Lancashire regiment, a small detachment of which was in the Fort, to assist in maintaining the peace of the city. He sent us twenty-five men. These were kept at the Kotwali as a reserve and to guard the prisoners, who now numbered ninety men. The men of the Madras Infantry detachment were picketed in the principal markets for the night. No further looting occurred.

“On Monday morning disturbances broke out in various parts of the city, and mobs armed with lathis were seen to be ready for mischief. Meanwhile, if the outbreak had been renewed, it would, in all probability, have been more serious than before. The mob would have come prepared to resist. Mr. Blenkinsop, therefore, asked Major Graves and Captain Biddulph to bring out such of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Rifles and Nagpur Volunteer Rifles respectively as they could. These were sent down most promptly to assist us. At the same time, Mr. Blenkinsop, with my concurrence, telegraphed to Kamptie to the General Officer commanding the District to send some men of the Lancashire regiment and of the Madras Infantry to relieve the men from Sitabaldi, whom it was undesirable to keep away from the Fort. Patrols moved about the city all night ; the mob was overawed, and all remained quiet. On Tuesday we sent back the European troops and Volunteers, and retained only a few of the Native Infantry as guards in the principal bazaars, with a reserve at the Kotwali. From this time there was no renewal of the disturbance. All was quiet in the city.

“The rioters were mainly ill-disposed persons bent on plunder. But for the prompt action of the military authorities, and the fact that the civil officers engaged in restoring peace were generally well known and popular among the people, there would undoubtedly have been determined resistance, and probably considerable loss of life. As it was, there was really very little violence. Not a shot was fired or a bayonet used. The only death that occurred was that of an old and feeble grain merchant,

who was seized by a fit owing to his terror, and passed away. Our sudden arrival on the scene, speedily followed by the troops, created a panic and quelled the disturbance in the city in an incredibly short space of time."

My responsibility in this show was nil, and to me the whole thing was a screaming farce. I quote it only to show, as Sir A. Fraser so ably points out, what an effect can be produced on an Eastern mob by the presence of European officers in authority, if only they are there at the right moment. The personality of the Deputy-Commissioner of Nagpur in one portion of the city and that of the Commissioner in the other—both well-known officers and respected by the inhabitants of the town—may be said to have quelled what would have been a dangerous rising.

Although quelled for the time being in Nagpur city, the disturbance soon spread to the surrounding villages. There seems little doubt, indeed, as subsequent inquiry showed, that plans were made for a simultaneous rising in several towns on a later day in the week, and that the rising in the city on the Sunday was fortunately premature. I remained only long enough in Nagpur to give my evidence against the prisoners, and then returned as quickly as possible to Chanda, where I feared trouble of a similar nature might be brewing. At Warora the following morning I held a meeting at the Town Hall, and explained to the people what had occurred at Nagpur, and warned them that any disturbance in the town would be similarly dealt with. It was easy to see after an inspection of the Bazaar that trouble was simmering, so

after telegraphing to Chanda for some of the Reserve Police to be despatched to Warora, I returned that afternoon to my headquarters, where I was glad to find things more or less quiet. On the other hand, trouble was coming from another quarter. In a previous chapter I have described how relief in the form of kitchens for children had been started, and with the still further tightening of the price of food-grains since my absence at Nagpur, I naturally expected to find a considerable increase in the weekly returns of the kitchen attendance. Judge then of my amazement at finding a sudden fall of from something over 8000 to as many hundreds; and within the next twenty-four hours of the submission of the last return there was not a single child attending a kitchen in the District. And the cause! Well, it will be difficult for anyone unacquainted with the East to credit, but it is none the less a fact. It will be remembered that it was the year of our great Queen's Diamond Jubilee. During my absence, some fiend in human form had spread abroad throughout the District, in the manner so well known to the Indian agitator, the report that the *Rani Sahib*¹ had expressed a wish to be presented as a souvenir of the occasion with a necklace of the eyes of young Indian children! That it was for this express purpose that the Deputy Commissioner was collecting them in the kitchens, and that on a certain day, when the number was sufficient, they were all at the same moment throughout the District to have their eyes gouged out of their heads!

It was quite sufficient; and if the children didn't believe it, their ignorant parents did, and every single

¹ Queen Empress.



A CHANDA BUFFALO



child had been recalled. And this in the year of grace 1898 ! Needless to say, it did not take long to contradict the rumour and to get the kitchens going again. But it took some weeks, and in the meanwhile the poor little kids went to bed hungry, and many of them actually in want of food. It only goes to show that what was done in pre-mutiny days can be done now, and that the adepts at lies of those days are as much alive and as dangerous as they were then. Possibly even more so.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Commission Week at Nagpur—A cricket match—Wit and humour in the High Court of Nagpur—Famine in Chanda through complete failure of the rains—A Famine Conference at Nagpur—I proceed to Australia on leave—My marriage in Australia—Our wedding feast—My parting tip to the porter at Macedon—Mr. Thomas E. Eddy, the American, and his cigars—Miss Myra Neild

THE great event of the year at Nagpur, the capital of the Central Provinces, is the Commission Week, when the Central Province Commission, from the Chief Commissioner down to the latest joined civilian from England, combine for the space of a week to entertain the entire world and his wife. Everybody who can be spared from his District is cordially invited in, and the residents arrange amongst themselves for putting them up. From an administrative point of view it is an excellent idea, as it gives District Officers an opportunity of discussing amongst themselves the thousand and one worries which are constantly cropping up in their respective charges, while from a social point of view it has from the very first been a great success. It is a week of balls, dinner-parties, and other festivities, and it affords the Commission an opportunity to challenge all and sundry to polo, cricket, tent-pegging, gymkhanas and race meetings. And as I generally represented the Commission at cricket and polo, and usually had some ponies running in the gymkhanas and races, I always looked forward to the week with much pleasure. On one occa-



Photo. by P. Chatterback, Esq.

A CHANDA SAMBHUR



sion we had a two-day match, Commission *v.* the World, with the Commission Ball intervening. Having met that evening quite a number of old friends with whom it was necessary to revive old times, my bearer somehow or another omitted to call me in time the next morning, and I arrived in the field about an hour late. My excuses were futile and my reception hostile. The only remark from the skipper was, "Go point." I did so. No sooner had I turned round than a ball came at me like a shot out of a gun. Putting out a huge hand—for my cricket nickname was "haversacks"—the ball hit it, and it stopped, but I knew no more. Whilst groping for it on the ground a voice came from long leg, "Coxon, it's the middle one." The voice came from the present Sir Charles Cleveland, Head of the Criminal Department in India, and as he is a very big man there was no reply. And I fear me it was deserved.

It was while on one of these visits that I heard an amusing finish to a civil case which was being tried by Sir Stanley Ismay in our High Court. It was an appeal case, and on the one side there was a Mr. Stanyon, an English barrister, and on the other, a number of native pleaders. The arguments on both sides had been heard, and the case closed for judgment. Suddenly, to Mr. Stanyon's intense astonishment, one of these pleaders got up and started re-addressing the Court. Mr. Stanyon suffered it for some time, until at last, losing patience, he also stood up, and addressing the Court said: "Your Honour, I would beg with all respect to point out to the Court that my learned friend opposite is entirely out of order in addressing the Court, and if I may be permitted

to say so, the Court has no right to be listening to him."

The Court, who was at the time busy writing, putting his head over the dais said: "Mr. Stanyon, it's a great piece of impertinence on your part to assume that the Court is listening to him."

The scarcity of food and the partial distress which we suffered from in 1897 has already been described. We were now to learn what actual famine meant. The hot weather of 1899 was characterised by abnormal showers, which were read by the people as an omen of disaster. The monsoon was late and very weak. In August there was a general and most welcome rainfall, but with September the rain practically ceased and famine became assured. The total rainfall of the year at Chanda was only twenty inches, as against a normal of about sixty. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I., who was at the time Chief Commissioner of the Province, had no intention of having a repetition of the experiences of 1897, and, taking time well by the forelock, called a Famine Conference at Nagpur of all the Deputy Commissioners of the Nagpur Division, to discuss the situation and the preventive measures to be undertaken. We duly assembled at Government House early in August, and on stating my case it was found that Chanda was likely to be the most heavily hit District in the Division. This calamity came at a most awkward time for me, for I had already been promised leave for the purpose of my marriage in Australia. On thinking over things on my return to Chanda I considered it my duty, in the face of such a catastrophe, to write in and offer to forgo my leave should my presence in the

District be considered necessary. To my dismay my offer was accepted, and my marriage, already long delayed, was once more removed to the dim and distant future. Then came that welcome and totally unexpected rainfall already alluded to, which, had it but continued for a few days, would have saved the District. Here was my chance, and off went a telegram to the Government: "Glorious soaking rain throughout the District. Can I have my leave? Letter follows." The letter explained, amongst other things, that my leave was only for two months, and that even if famine eventuated I would be back in the District before any actual operations could be taken in hand. The request, I suppose, was too human to be refused, and to my joy it was granted. It poured with rain on the day of my departure. The very next day it stopped, and it never rained again. How mercilessly I was chaffed afterwards about that telegram! But it was genuine, and after all, anybody who wants more than a twelve months' experience of an Indian famine is only fit for Bedlam.

On my arrival in Australia it was good news to me to find that, instead of a big fashionable function at Melbourne, where my father-in-law, Dr. Dougan Bird, lived, my fiancée, Miss May Bird, had decided to be married from her country home up at Mount Macedon, where, as a matter of fact, she had lived with her sister, Mrs. Claude Ferrier-Hamilton, ever since she was quite a child. The wedding morn broke just as no wedding morn should break. It was cloudy and cold and raining in torrents, and everything was about as gloomy as it could well be. On our way up the mountain to the church the rain turned

into snow, but during the ceremony the snow stopped and the sun burst forth. A prettier view than that to be seen from the church after the ceremony could not be conceived. Looking down over the valley as far as the eye could reach, the whole country-side was covered with a light mantle of the most beautiful white snow, through which could be seen the hawthorn on the hedges, and the roses, clematis, and wistaria in profusion in the many gardens on the hill-sides. Snow at this time of the year was quite an exceptional event, and as many of the people who had come by the special train from Melbourne had never in their lives seen snow, "our day" was altogether a day to be remembered. Miss Bird was well known in the neighbourhood, and the people had erected a number of very pretty triumphal arches through which we passed to the wedding feast, and the beautiful afternoon more than made amends for the promise of the morn. The success of everything might well have been marred by the lugubrious gentleman who proposed our health. He meant well, but in rising for the office he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure I rise to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom. We all know that India is a land of unhappy marriages" . . . What he intended to say was never heard, for the uproar of cheers and laughter which met his efforts, was such that the poor man lost the thread of his discourse, and the rest of the sermon was taken as read.

As we were going to an hotel in the mountains, it was arranged that we should drive there, and as it was a temperance hotel, my sister-in-law had provided all sorts of dainties and luxuries to be taken in the



Photo. by Vandye of Melbourne

THE "LADY OF THE LIFT"



carriage. At the last moment, however, my brother-in-law, fearing that we should be cramped for room, had our belongings, together with the good things, removed and put into a second carriage which was to follow us. Our dinner that night was ordered for 7.30, and we arrived in good time for it. Eight o'clock, 8.30, and yet we were without change of clothing, or the additional luxuries which were to form part of our marriage feast. At last, at nine o'clock, our charming hostess of the hotel, Miss James, insisted on our sitting down as we were, and to take the place of the champagne, which was apparently still on its way, she managed to provide us with some whisky and port which, she assured us, was kept strictly for medicinal purposes. Ten, eleven, and midnight arrived, and still no clothes. Imagine it. No nighties even on your wedding night ! Men had been sent out to scour the country, but with no success, and at last Miss James, who was, I think, the most distressed of the party, came to our sitting-room, and turning me out of it, had a consultation with my wife. The result of this interview was the offer of some quite fascinating garments for the wife, and for myself a pink flannel dressing-gown ! But while sitting downstairs and smoking my forty-fifth pipe I heard a row outside, and on going out to ascertain the cause; discovered to my joy that the long-lost second carriage had been found overturned in a ditch. The driver, poor chap, who was an old friend of the family's, had drunk so persistently to our long life and happiness, that he had taken the "wrong turning," and it was not until 2.45 on that eventful morning that we recovered our essentials. Nothing could exceed the kindness we

received at the hands of our hostess in our emergency, and before leaving Australia we presented her with a silver writing-table clock as a souvenir of the occasion—and we were careful when despatching it to adjust the hands to 2.45 ; a little touch which was duly appreciated.

Another incident which caused me mirth occurred when we took our final departure from Macedon railway station *en route* for India. The solitary porter there was a man named Henderson, and a right good chap he was. On bidding him good-bye, and placing a piece of gold in his hand as my final tip to him, he astonished me by saying when pouching it, “Thank you, but I’ve got ’alf a mind to put a ’ead on yer.” Thinking that I had unwittingly offended him, I said, “Why, what’s the matter, Henderson?” “Well,” he said, pointing to my wife, “you’re taking ’er away.” A prettier compliment he could not have paid me, and it was typically Australian.

We had a great send-off from Melbourne, and joined the P. & O. *Arcadia*—which, by the way, now lies at the bottom of the Channel, somewhere in the vicinity of Dungeness—the following day at Adelaide. Funnily enough, there were three newly-married couples on board. We were all mutual friends and had been married in different parts of Australia on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the same week—Mr. and Mrs. Colin Stephen at Sydney on the Monday, Mr. and Mrs. Percy Landale at Melbourne on the Tuesday, and ourselves at Macedon on the Wednesday. It perhaps goes without saying that while on board we were known, not by our names but by the days on which we were married.

The ship was not overcrowded, and altogether it was

quite the jolliest passage I can ever remember making. Going into the smoking-room after dinner on the first night we were on board, I saw the biggest man I have ever seen in my life. He was an American, and came in and sat down immediately opposite me. He then proceeded to produce from the inside breast-pocket of his coat—not a cigar-case, but a handful of the most gorgeous-looking cigars, all wrapped up in gold tissue-paper and enclosed in talc covers. Turning to the man sitting next to him, he said; “Will you have a cigar, sir?” Now if there is one thing more than another I covet it is a real good cigar. Will any of my readers kindly note this fact? My best man, Captain Fagan of the 3rd Madras Lancers, was sitting next me at the time, and I said to him, “You see. I shall be there to-morrow night.” And sure enough I was. Eddy turning towards me said, “Will you have a cigar, sir?” “It’s what I am here for,” I replied, and from that time on we were the greatest chums. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Eddy of New York, who were making a voyage round the world, were quite a charming and entertaining couple, and I was only too glad on our arrival at Bombay to be able, as a member of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, to show them all the hospitality I could. I had many of his cigars on the voyage up, and when we finally bade each other good-bye, he said, “Coxon, I’m always pleased to meet a man who can really appreciate a good cigar, and if you’ll allow me, when I get to Havana I’ll send you a few.” I thanked him, but knowing the value of the promise of the ordinary “globe-trotter” we meet in the East—who, by the way, is generally of a poisonous

species—(will any brother Eastern support me in this statement, I wonder?)—I forgot it as soon as it was made. Months afterwards when returning to the bungalow after a tour of inspection of the famine camps, I found on dismounting from my horse a huge case blocking up the entrance. Taking it to be a case of stores just up from Bombay, I gave orders to have it unpacked. It contained five hundred of dear old Eddy's best cigars, and if he ever reads these words I hope he will realise how very much I appreciated the gift. They lasted me for years.

The budget of news we received before sailing for India was of the very gloomiest, and though our all too short honeymoon in Australia had been of the jolliest, I feared me that India under existing circumstances was no place to take a bride to. But we had to make the best of a bad job, and I endeavoured to buck my wife up on the voyage by assuring her that she would be the most popular woman in the District. And so she undoubtedly was, for there was no other ; and it is a positive fact that for the first six months of her married life, beyond the maid she had brought up with her from Australia, she did not see another white woman ! And before tackling famine, I must first say one word about this girl, Miss Myra Neild, for without her I don't quite know what we should have done. She was a lady, and the daughter of a Dr. Neild who had lost a fortune in the land boom. In fact she was a school-fellow of my wife's, and everybody was against the risk of taking her in such a position. But between them they had arrived at a perfect understanding, and a better combination of maid and companion never lived than Myra Neild, and never a Christmas passes now

that we don't hear from her. Strangely enough she was with us when the medical profession in Australia met at dinner to celebrate the return of Sir Thomas Fitzgerald from the South African War. In the illustrated papers which reached us from Australia, there was a picture of this very dinner, showing Dr. Neild, the maid's father, in the chair, and Dr. Dougan Bird, my father-in-law, and his son, Dr. Fred Bird, some places away on either side of him.

CHAPTER XXIV

A brief account from official records of the great Indian Famine of 1900-1901 as it affected the Chanda District

IT was on the 2nd December 1899 that I again took over charge of the Chanda District from my *locum tenens*, Mr. A. B. Napier, I.C.S. And let me here take advantage of the opportunity of once again giving expression to the deep sense of obligation I am under to him for all he did for me during these trying two months. His was a thankless task, for the organisation of relief operations involved an immense amount of thought and work, and it was a lucky thing for me that he was no stranger to the District. Still more fortunate is the fact that Napier and I were old friends, and to give an old friend a helping hand over a stile, is always a Christian and a pleasing act. It is no part of my intention to weary my readers with an account of what can be read in any of the official Blue Books on the subject of the great Indian Famine of 1900. Let it suffice to say here that the five main heads for the relief of the people were :

(1) Large famine camps, under the management of the Department of Public Works, for the construction of roads and other public works.

(2) Village works ; which consisted chiefly of the construction and repairs of village tanks and wells for the irrigation of the land.

(3) Forest works ; such as roads, fodder and grass-



Ph. L. J. J. J.

A GROUP OF FAMINE BABIES, THE SPECIAL CARE OF THE "LADY OF THE LIFT"



cutting operations within the areas of the Government forests.

(4) Village gratuitous relief under which the lame, the halt, and the blind and the dependents of others gone to work in the camps were given a monthly dole either in money or kind.

(5) Village kitchens in which the children were fed.

Subsidiary to the above, but very important, were :

(a) The throwing open of the Government reserved forests for the free collection of edible fruits and roots, and the collection of firewood and thatching grass.

(b) The suspensions and remissions of land revenue and other taxes.

(c) Government loans without interest for the purchase of seed, grain, and cattle.

(d) The charitable relief fund for the provision of medical comforts and clothing. This fund was raised in London, and was generously subscribed to by the entire English-speaking world.

Each camp contained anything from 5,000 up to 20,000 workers, and kitchens were subsequently added to them for the relief of any children or dependents incapable of work who accompanied the workers to the camp.

Village and forest works were run on the same principle as the camps, only they were smaller in size and, as a result, the work was better done, and was always of a more profitable and useful character.

The main principle underlying all Government relief was to demand and enforce wherever possible a day's work for a day's wage, and this was only relaxed in the

case of children and cripples and those otherwise physically incapable of working. For a brief account of these operations in the Chanda District, and to avoid the constant repetition of the everlasting "I" which is the bugbear of all reminiscences, I have extracted from the official Gazetteer of the Central Provinces a portion of it pertaining to the Chanda District and give it below.

"GENERAL COURSE OF THE FAMINE.—The official duration of the famine was from September 1899 to October 1900, but relief operations in this District continued till the end of the year. The scarcity was most intense in the trans-Wainganga tract. The Brahmapuri tahsil as a whole, depending as it does almost entirely upon the rice crop, was very severely hit, but Warora was less seriously affected, while true famine conditions can scarcely be said to have existed in Sironcha. Before the commencement of relief operations, the refusal of the Banias to sell their grain stocks provoked several grain riots, especially in the vicinity of Talodhi, but this tendency was promptly checked by the police. Want of water and fodder began to be felt in January, and by April nearly all wells were dry. Fortunately, the network of *nullahs*¹ which covers the District provided a solution of the difficulty, so far as drinking water for human beings was concerned, and this was obtainable throughout the hot weather by digging holes in their beds. In the early part of 1900, some consolation was afforded by the unprecedented flowering of the bamboos, which gave an

¹ Streams.

unexpected supply of food to the poorer classes, and by the fair promise of the *mahua*¹ crop. The numbers on relief fluctuated between 60,000 and 80,000 up to April, when suddenly the *mahua* crop absolutely failed, a wholly unforeseen calamity, the intensity of which cannot be exaggerated, when it is considered to what an extent the large jungly population of this district depends on the products of the *mahua* for its food supply. The numbers on relief immediately rose with a bound, until at the end of May they stood at over 180,000. The sufferings of the cattle, meanwhile, were dreadful, as it was impossible to provide water for them. But the flood of disaster had not yet exhausted itself. In the middle of June, cholera broke out and raged furiously, immediately carrying the disease to the four corners of the District. Mr. Coxon, the Deputy Commissioner, wrote of this period :

“ ‘ By the end of June every element of destruction appeared to have combined against the people of this District, and with the rains holding off, the prospects were of the gloomiest. The heat was something that had never before been experienced, and men were dropping daily from sunstroke. Cholera was raging to such an extent that it was found impossible to collect people together in any one place, even for the distribution of the money which was so urgently required for the purchase of food, while fires were sweeping villages off the face of the earth wholesale.’ ”

“ At length the monsoon broke, though late, dissipating the cholera epidemic, but even then, owing to the

¹ A fruit which is much eaten by the poorer classes.

general poverty and scarcity of seed-grain, pressure did not relax, and the numbers on kitchen relief went on increasing, until in September they rose to over 227,000. The *nullahs* were, with the advent of the monsoon, transformed from a blessing into a curse, constituting a most formidable barrier against the transit of grain, and rendering relief operations a matter of the greatest difficulty. About the middle of September, the numbers on relief began to decline, at first slowly, but in the early part of October by 5000 or 6000 a day, until by the end of that month they stood at only 77,000. Nevertheless, owing to the backwardness of the *khariif*¹ harvest, the famine lingered on for a period not paralleled in the rest of the province; mortality continued high, and prices obstinately refused to fall. Whereas elsewhere famine relief practically ceased after the middle of November, in this District kitchens continued to the end of that month, and the village relief list was not finally closed till the end of the year.

“MORTALITY.—The mortality from September 1899 to October 1900 was, according to the official returns, 51,663 deaths, or 89.75 per mille of the population, and for the calendar year 1900 the rate of mortality was 96.62. The highest mortality for any one month was 17 per mille in June, when cholera was at its height. Over 43 per cent. of the casualties took place among children under ten years of age, and infant mortality was, owing to an abnormal number of births in the preceding year, especially heavy. Cholera accounted for 8000 deaths, fever for 19,000, and bowel complaints for nearly 5500.

¹ The spring crop.



Photo. by Author

STONE-BREAKING BY FAMINE COOLIES, SHOWING GANG-FLAGS



These latter are supposed to have been largely induced by the use of Bengal rice. Only one death was actually attributed to starvation, but an immense amount of the mortality from other causes must, of course, have been due to the reduced condition of the persons attacked.

“CONDITION OF THE CATTLE.—If the condition of the people was pitiable, the fate of their cattle was still more appalling. Something was done towards providing them with fodder, but the water difficulty was insuperable, and they died like flies from thirst. The exorbitant rates prevailing for cart-hire were the death of many a poor beast, driven till he dropped dead from sheer exhaustion. The sides of the road from Warora to Chanda were strewn along its whole length with corpses of animals which had perished thus, and the scenes at the river-crossings were too ghastly for description. The privation of water was not confined to domestic animals. Tigers were shot or stoned to death in village wells. One officer, adapting himself to the circumstances of the time, sat over a trough of water in place of the usual buffalo, thus securing on one occasion two tigers in one beat. Strangest of all, during well-deepening operations in Alapalli in the month of May, there were simultaneously found alive in one well seven monkeys, one *nilgai*, three sambhar, and five bison, a collection which has the makings of no mean menagerie. When the rains came, and the starving survivors of the cattle fell upon the young grass, the mortality caused by the surfeit of food acting on their impaired digestive organs was something frightful. Altogether it was estimated by Mr. Coxon that at least 120,000, or 25 to 30 per cent., of the entire stock of cattle must have perished. Plough

cattle alone, which would naturally have been most carefully preserved and earliest replaced, decreased by 20,000 in the year.

“EXPENDITURE ON RELIEF.—The measures of relief taken to combat the situation were admirably organised and worthy of its gravity. In the words of one of those who were relieved, ‘it was all very wonderful, and the Sarkar¹ regarded money as *gitti*² so long as the people were kept alive.’ The direct expenditure on the several heads of famine relief amounted to 23 lakhs, and out of this expenditure 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ million day units were relieved at an incidence per diem of 1.19 annas per unit. Suspensions of land revenue amounted to 2.15 lakhs, while the value of forest concessions was 1.62 lakhs. The amount of land revenue suspended represents 74 per cent. of the total demand, and in fact the only sums collected were those due from non-rice villages. Besides this, Government distributed 3.65 lakhs in *taccavi* loans to enable the cultivators to complete their sowings for 1900–01, while 1.86 lakhs were distributed in free gifts for the same purpose to the poorer cultivators out of the Charitable Relief Fund. Within the District itself a sum of over Rs. 68,000 was collected by private subscription on the understanding that it should be all disbursed locally. Nearly Rs. 30,000 of it was utilised in buying clothes from local weavers, and was thus made to serve twice over for purposes of relief.

“MEASURES OF RELIEF.—No poorhouses or pauper wards were established. Kitchens were organised at the commencement of the famine, but were discontinued for

¹ Government.

² The stone used for metalling the rods.

a time in the *khalsa*¹ when the camps opened, although in the zamindaris they were always a main feature. Relief camps under the management of the Public Works Department were opened in October, and formed the backbone of the operations until well on in the hot weather. The total number of Public Works charges opened was sixteen, and the maximum open at any one time was fifteen. The largest number of workers on relief at any time in these camps was 80,895 on the 12th of May, or over 72 per cent. of the total numbers on famine relief at that time. The Forest Department, besides forming camps for the construction of two roads, with tank works annexed, took in hand extensive fodder operations for the supply of Wardha and the Bombay Presidency ; 26 grass depôts were established, and 7109 tons of grass collected. The maximum number relieved by forest works was rather over 9000 towards the end of May. Other fodder operations in the zamindari forests of the north were put in charge of the manager of the Court of Wards, and, though not financially successful, gave useful relief to the neighbouring population. Tank schemes involving an expenditure of 3¼ lakhs were drawn up, and numerous tanks were taken in hand as village works. At the close of the hot weather 179 such works were in operation, and the number of workers on them was over 26,000. In April, the failure of the mahua crop necessitated special measures, and an enormous impetus was given to kitchen relief. A special staff had to be engaged, as it was no longer possible to manage the kitchens by the agency of volunteers. With the opening of the rains, the relief policy had to be

¹ The plains or cultivated area, as distinct from the hill tracks.

modified to suit the altered conditions. Relief camps became unsuitable, as the one great object was to make the people go back to their villages, and let them work in the fields, in the meanwhile feeding them and keeping them in health. Village relief now became the order of the day, and the form which it took was chiefly the extension of the kitchen system. In July, the rush was so great that 200 subsidiary kitchens were started and put in charge of *mukaddams*.¹ The highest number of kitchens simultaneously at work at any one time was 239, with 161,443 inmates. All inmates were required to do some service in return for their food, and gratuitous relief was confined to cripples, blind persons, and the dependents of *kotwars*. Relief in return for work in villages (B-list relief) was found especially necessary in the case of cultivators of small means, and was more freely resorted to than in any other District of the Province. The workers were mainly employed in carrying grain to kitchens and dépôts. The numbers on B-list relief reached a maximum of over 54,000 about the middle of September. The maximum number of persons on relief of all kinds at any one time was 180,673 during the open season and 224,799 during the rains. This latter figure represented 32 per cent. of the total population.

“FAMINE WORKS.—Of the sixteen roads taken in hand by the Public Works Department, none were actually brought to completion, although earth and *muram* ² were laid along thirty-two miles of the road from Warora to Chimur. Nineteen tanks were, however, constructed as annexes to these roads, and notably four

¹ Village headmen.

² Top-dressing for unmetalled roads.

very fine tanks were built at Naotalla. The Forest Department constructed an excellent second-class road 18 miles in length from Chanda to Moharli, and another $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length from Alapalli to Ahiri, besides some tanks. Altogether, as village or forest works, four new tanks were constructed, and 238 existing tanks were restored or improved, while seven new roads were taken in hand, of which five were completed. Ten wells were also sunk.

“ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE.—Crime naturally received an impetus during the progress of the famine, especially in Brahmapuri, where the number of thefts and housebreakings increased by over 600. But the attitude of the people as a whole, except for the grain riots in the early days of the distress, was one of complete apathy or fatalism. Mr. Coxon describes it as one of ‘absolute indifference combined with a perfect confidence in the *Sarkar*.’¹ As to their appreciation of the efforts made by Government to alleviate their misery, the prevailing impression at the time seems to have been that real gratitude was conspicuous by its absence, although lip-gratitude, especially in acknowledgment of gifts of clothing, was fairly common. Doles and wages were usually grumbled at as insufficient, and the usual cry in the kitchens was for more or for a different kind of food, or a gift of clothing. But it is admitted that it is very difficult to gauge the real feelings of the people by their actions or expressions, and it is certain that the indelible impression left by the famine is always coupled in the minds of all with a profound conviction of the

¹ Government.

immense efforts made by Government to cope with an unparalleled disaster.

“CASUALTIES OF THE FAMINE STAFF.—Thirty officials, all natives, lost their lives in conducting the campaign against the famine, while many others were invalided.”



Photo. by Author

A FAMINE KITCHEN, CHANDA, SHOWING CHILDREN MUSTERING OUTSIDE



CHAPTER XXV

The European Famine Staff—My Australian buggy—Famine dacoities—The cholera epidemic in the camps—Famine in the rains—I get an attack of ophthalmia—My wife's effort to join me; she has to swim three rivers on an elephant—Missionaries in India—My opinion of them

IN addition to the ordinary European staff of the District, which consisted of Mr. T. Latham, District Superintendent of Police; and Mr. W. P. White, his assistant; Captain Dallas, I.M.S., the Civil Surgeon; and Mr. A. E. Lowrie, the Forest Officer, the following Officers were specially appointed as Famine Assistants: Mr. H. F. Hallifax, I.C.S.; Mr. H. Num, I.C.S.; and Mr. G. A. Khan, I.C.S.; Captain Roberts of the Indian Army; Messrs. G. H. Streatfield and R. A. Burns of the Police; Messrs. A. P. Percival, F. W. Wightman, and F. Reay of the Forests; Mr. G. Stanyon of the Postal Department, and the Rev. A. Wood of the Oxford Mission.

It was a gruesome campaign we had to wage, and from the day we started, and during those long dreary months in the most fearsome climate, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that not one of us had anything under an eighteen-hour working day. The chief difficulty before me was to devise means for getting about this huge charge, for personal and constant inspection was the very keynote of success of any such undertaking. Fortunately, while in Australia, I had purchased a stud of eight horses and polo ponies, and this,

together with an Australian buggy which had accompanied them, was to be my saving. For between the two, driving where possible, and having saddle horses placed conveniently, I was able to travel enormous distances. As an illustration of the convenience these were to me, it may be mentioned that at one time alarming reports came through to me that the people on the borders of the District were out of hand, and that armed bands of dacoits, numbering hundreds strong, were attacking and looting the villages wholesale. With the horses available I made a dash across country to the spot and, personally investigating the circumstances, took my own line of action to put a stop to the nuisance ; and when, a couple of days afterwards, two European police officers arrived to arrest all and sundry, they found the "Majesty of the Law," in the person of their District Magistrate, holding his court in the opening of a small tent with a large solar topee on his head and with nothing on but a towel round his loins. Beside him he had a tin bath full of cold water, and every quarter of an hour he solemnly adjourned his court, closed down the fly of his tent, and cooled his person by an immersion in his tub ! The temperature recorded that day was 123° in the shade. As a matter of fact I was busy treating these gangs of "dangerous dacoits" as simple thefts, trying them summarily by batches of twenty, and tying them up to the nearest tree and flogging them for the offence. Of course my procedure was entirely illegal, but to treat these men as dangerous dacoits, who were after all only stealing food wherewith to fill their stomachs, would have entailed a trial lasting months ; and under abnormal



Photo by Anderson

OUR AUSTRALIAN BUGGY OUTSIDE OUR BUNGALOW AT CHANDA



conditions, normal procedure and methods have to be relaxed. Moreover, the mere sudden arrival of the Deputy Commissioner on the scene, and the prompt punishment inflicted had quite a marvellous effect, and my methods, though admittedly illegal, were never subsequently questioned or criticised. Yes, that stable of mine was a good purchase and the horses were kept going hard during the whole period of the famine.

The cholera epidemic referred to in the report was an awful experience, and there was but one European doctor to deal with it ! No wonder poor Dallas fell ill and had to go home, and there is little doubt that his subsequent death in England was due to the strain and anxiety incurred during the cholera scare. The actual outbreak was brought to my notice under the following circumstances. Orders had already been issued to take all necessary precautions to deal with a possible epidemic, and all charge officers, both European and native, were out inspecting camps and getting the necessary hospitals and segregation sheds constructed as quickly as possible. Making for the Mul camp, which was at the time the largest in the District, I found to my relief at my morning inspection that there were no reported cases. The same evening again saw me at the camp hastening on the construction of the sheds. Still no cases. On getting on to my horse to ride back to my tents, I noticed in the distance some carts coming towards me which, as they bumped over the furrows in the ploughed ground, appeared to me to be dislodging their contents. Taking my binoculars from the saddle, I was horrified to find that the peculiar movements at the top of the carts were

nothing more nor less than the limbs of lifeless humans, and that there were already before me seven cartloads of cholera corpses. So great was the terror inspired by this sudden outbreak that in the course of that one night the camp was reduced from something in the region of 20,000 people to a few hundreds. And I find from a reference to the returns of my Famine Report, that between the end of May and the 16th of June, 41,603 starving people had fled terror-stricken from the different camps, carrying the disease to the four corners of the District.

During the hot weather, when in spite of the heat we could get about, the work was hard enough for us all, and yet when the rains broke, and we perhaps expected some diminution of distress, the difficulties we had to contend with were increased a hundredfold. In my Famine Report I find the following on the subject :

“ By this time the charge officers of Chimur, Chamursi, Dhanora, Ahiri, and Mul were all crying out loudly for assistance, and, though the grain was purchased, the greatest difficulty was experienced in getting it out to them. The rivers were in flood, and the roads in the interior impossible for anything in the shape of wheeled traffic, while every available cart on the Warora-Chanda road (the only metalled one) was engaged day and night in getting the grain from the railway to Chanda town. Some idea of the demand for carts may be gathered from the fact that, whereas in ordinary times the rate per bag for grain was four annas, the merchants were paying anything up to Rs. 3 a bag, and cartmen owned up to making quite a fortune out of the traffic. No wonder then that the cattle were sacrificed to the necessity of the hour,

and that the mortality along this road alone was appalling. The grain had, however, to go out, and impressment was the order of the day, and where carts could not travel every sort of beast of burden, including bullocks, ponies, and asses, was commandeered. In addition to this it was found necessary to organise a coolie transport corps, carrying head-loads of grain to places where it could be transported by no other means. In all, for the space of over two months, we had 17,191 coolies, 6671 pack animals, and between 3000 and 4000 carts busily engaged day and night carrying food to the distressed areas."

Touring in the rains in India even under normal conditions is not a thing of joy, and in a District like Chanda it is always more or less difficult to get about. But, provided you don't mind being wet, and having everything belonging to you in the same condition, even to your food, clothing, and bedding, it is possible. Nothing, however, was allowed to stand in the way of my charge and inspecting officers carrying out their duties, and the manner in which they circumvented difficulties was beyond all praise. Wading and swimming of streams and rivers was of common occurrence, and on one occasion young White, being anxious to reach a kitchen on the opposite bank of a flooded river, actually attempted to get across in his bath-tub lashed to some bamboos, and very nearly lost his life in the attempt. When however, as frequently happens, what was in the day a small stream becomes in the course of a night a raging torrent hundreds of yards wide, you are up against something that only patience can overcome. There were no proper ferries anywhere in

the District, and I have known people and merchandise to be camped on the banks of the Erai river—only three miles outside Chanda town, for over a week before they could get across. If this can happen at a river bank on the only metalled road in the District, viz. that between Chanda and the railway at Warora, it can be easily imagined that the delays at other rivers, further in the interior, were greater and more serious. Under these circumstances the nearest famine kitchen was frequently resorted to by inspecting officers as a means of providing both food and shelter to them until such time as they could get on. Personally I know that many a time the foundation of my evening meal has been drawn from a famine kitchen, and again at times I have had nothing else. But dangers lurked under these otherwise hospitable roofs, for through the scarcity of the water in the hot weather many of the children became verminous, and there was an immense amount of ophthalmia amongst them. It was while halting at one of these places that I got attacked myself and had to be taken hurriedly into Nagpur by the Civil Surgeon for treatment. This occurred at the very burst of the floods. I just got in to the railway in time. That night the rivers came down and the following morning movement was impossible. But it takes a good deal to stop a wife anxious to join a sick husband, and when mine found that no native could suggest any means to her she referred the matter to the only two European officers who were at headquarters at the time, viz. Mr. Lowrie, the Forest officer, and Mr. Wood, the padre. Such a request took no denial, and Lowrie immediately placed a reliable Forest elephant at her dis-



Photo. by Author

MYRA'S CAMP CARRIAGE



posal, and Wood, like the good chap he was, undertook to escort her to Warora. Now the journey from Chanda to Warora was one of twenty-eight miles, and in that distance no less than five rivers had to be crossed, and the only way of doing so was by swimming them on the elephant. The party consisted of my wife May, Myra Neild, Wood, and the mahout, and as when swimming there is literally nothing of the elephant to be seen beyond his head and the people on the howdah, the risk and danger in a strong running river to those aboard is considerable. They did it, and they found me safely the next day at Nagpur. With the exception of the medical branch of missionary work in India, I have no sympathy with missionary enterprise of any sort, and I am one of those who deplore the millions that go out of England for the conversion of the native, be he Hindu, Chinaman, or Turk. They are much better left as they are, and to anyone who says otherwise I would ask one plain question: Will you ever get a Britisher in India to take on, for choice, as his servant or in his employ a native convert in preference to the raw article? The answer is most emphatically No, and the proof of the pudding is after all in the eating thereof. So why waste all this money which is so urgently required for our starving poor at home? Amongst these men themselves there are many worthy and excellent fellows, but go to any up-country District in India and you generally find them living in excellent houses, very often the best in the place, and in exceedingly comfortable circumstances. They have their *tongas*¹ and their *tum-tums*,² draw a premium for every child they bring

¹ Vehicle drawn by bullocks.

² Pony-cart.

into the world, and frequently go to the Hills for the hot weather. Hardly what one can call a life of hardship, privation, or toil! I once had a long conversation myself on the subject with a Roman Catholic chaplain, and a more sincere and devout man never lived. He said, sorry as he was to have to say it, that there was no bottom in the converted native; and, once a Christian, he would change his religion for a good meal. Yes, I am a Catholic myself, but I offer no apologies. But our man Wood was a type by himself, and I only wish there were more like him. Earnest, devout, and sincere in his work, he would at the same time join with us in a game of polo, put on the boxing-gloves with the best, and enter into all our amusements; while for his work during the Famine his name will ever be remembered in Chanda.

And talking about him reminds me of the other good fellows I had with me at that time—Lowrie, Latham, Hallifax, poor Dallas who is gone, Roberts, Streatfield, and others—such a good crew. And here we are all now at different ends of the globe. Lowrie's influence amongst his natives was so great that I remember on one occasion, while inspecting one of his camps, a man named Deo, a Gond, had incurred his displeasure to such an extent that he warned him that he would be made to suffer for his neglect of duty. Sure enough, as fate would have it, cholera broke out in the camp the very next day. Deo lost his wife, daughter, and son from the fell disease, and, fearing lest his one remaining son should be taken from him, he came with his head in his hands to Lowrie and implored him to remove the curse. The curse was accordingly removed and Deo returned in happiness to

his village, and, as luck would have it, the son lived ! Hallifax, who is now a judge in India, had during this time of famine entire charge of the Sironcha Tahsil, where for something like eight months he lived like a native and never saw another white man. In fact when he returned to civilisation from Sironcha he looked more like a native than a European, for he had grown a long beard and was wearing a *pagari* on his head and sandals on his feet. Yes, I had a splendid staff, both European and native, and to show that I thoroughly appreciated the work they did for me I may perhaps be permitted for the last time to quote the final paragraph of my official report on the subject :

“ Looking back now on this year of hard work and anxiety, it is with the greatest pleasure that I admit that in my Famine staff I have been a singularly fortunate man. From the highest to the lowest, both those who have worked with me and under me, all have worked well and to the best of their ability. And to them, and especially to my charge officers who have indeed borne the heat and the burden of the day, I beg to tender my most respectful thanks. To the people themselves I also owe a debt of gratitude, for though gratitude may not be their *forte*, implicit confidence in what was being done for them was their motto, and submission to orders the keynote of their attitude to those who were placed in authority over them. In spite of a succession of years of adversity their conduct was always exemplary, and a more docile or trustful lot of people it would be difficult to conceive. I trust that in the years to come there is a brighter future in store for them and that it may

be given to them, or to their children at any rate, to realise and to appreciate to the full extent the splendid care the Government has taken of them, and the magnificent generosity the English-speaking peoples of the British Empire have extended to them during the Great Famine of 1899-1900."

Two other people whose names were never mentioned in any report, official or otherwise, who did good work during the year were the two ladies who accompanied me on some of my expeditions. Many a woman and child in Chanda have occasion to remember the kindness of these two ladies, viz. my wife and Myra Neild, for they made the weaker children their special care, and the group of emaciated women and children in this book shows some of those who were specially cared for by them in our compound at headquarters.



Photo by Author

A GROUP OF FAMINE ORPHANS IN OUR COMPOUND AT CHANDA, ALSO THE SPECIAL CARE OF THE
"LADY OF THE LIFT"



CHAPTER XXVI

Our Christmas camp—The death of the man-eater—The Famine Durbār—Bitter disappointment—The Kaisar-i-Hind: what is it? —The “value-payable-parcels-post” system in India

WE were now closing down relief as fast as we possibly could, and, finding that there was a man-eating tiger doing excessive damage in the vicinity of Amtargarh-Chouki, I decided to try and kill two birds with one stone and see if I could not include the tiger in the demolition of that camp. Being in the zamindari area it was one of the last to go, and arrangements were made to close it, and inspect the completion of the new road about Christmas time. The Chief Commissioner, who was touring close by in Raipur, and who was anxious to see the work, honoured me by accepting an invitation to my Christmas camp, and Lady Fraser and my old sea friend, Capt. F. M. Barwick of the *Kwangtung*, were amongst my guests. We succeeded in having a very cheery Christmas and a very cheery camp, and as our bag included two tigers, a bear, two panthers, and a couple of sambhur, besides a number of smaller variety, we had little to complain about, and I was more than pleased when my old chum Fred. Barwick downed, at this camp, his first tiger. But we had not accounted for the man-eater. The natives round about lived in dread of him. They declared that he had already accounted for over a hundred humans, and that transit on any of the neighbouring roads

was a work of extreme danger. It was therefore necessary to try at all costs to ensure his destruction. We were unfortunately tied for time. Sir Andrew Fraser had already fixed the date of the Famine Durbar at Nagpur, at which the honours for Famine work were to be bestowed, and could only spare four days with us, and as I and a number of my officers had been ordered to attend the Durbar, it was essential to get a kill before we left. Much to my regret Sir Andrew had to leave without even an interview with the man-eater, and we had arrived at our last morning in camp. I had extended the time by one day in order to give him a last chance of a meal, and yet again that morning came the sad news "No kill." There was nothing for it but to make the best of it, for with a long drive of over thirty-six miles to the station, we could only just keep to our dates. My camp was then reduced to Barwick, my wife, and myself. The sleeping tents were all down, the rifles and baggage packed up, and after a scratch meal there was no alternative but to take our departure. The horses had been ordered to be put into the buggy, and we three were actually sitting at this meal when there arose a fearful uproar in the kitchen! Loud cries of "*Bagh! Bagh!*" (tiger) were raised, and the servants were seen flying terror-stricken in all directions. And no wonder. For at 8.30 in the morning this fearless brute had pounced in amongst them, fortunately without being able to seize anybody. I suppose at the last moment the noise and the number of people about had dismayed even our audacious friend, and he had slunk away into a thick belt of jungle adjoining the camp. Jingru and a couple of my Gonds were up in half a minute, and



Photo. by Author

“FRED” ON TREK AFTER A PANTHER—AN ALL-NIGHT SITTING



quickly unpacking the rifles, Fred and I with a couple of .577 were on his tracks. At the entrance to the kitchen tent there sure enough were the fresh pugs of a large tiger, and we were soon close, and almost too close, upon him. On taking his somewhat hurried departure, we found that "stripes" had retreated into a large nullah, and on getting into it to examine a pug by which Jingru had decided definitely that it was the man-eater, I heard a "waugh," which seemed to be alongside my ear, and a quicker scramble out of a nullah was never made by mortal man than I did out of that one. After that Fred took one side and I the other. We could frequently hear him, but we never got a sight of him, and after it was all over we both agreed that we had never experienced a more exciting or thrilling half-hour. At last, fearing that if we kept on we might drive him out of the small belt of jungle he was in, and so lose him, I called a halt, and sending a written message into my wife by one of the Gonds, asked her to send at once by the bearer every available servant and coolie she could lay her hands on. The idea was for the guns to take up a certain position, and for the coolies to start suddenly making all the noise they were capable of, and by this means drive the tiger on to one or other of us. It was a forlorn hope, but as we had to get away there was no alternative. As the camp was only a few yards away the man was soon back with the beaters, in all something under twenty, armed with tea-kettles, frying-pans, *degchis*,¹ and any other utensil capable of making a noise. They

¹ Native saucepans.

were mostly servants, and I knew and did not expect that they would do any real beating. The great thing was to get them at a given signal to make a row, and this they did most effectually. The signal was given, and almost instantaneously the tiger appeared, apparently quite unalarmed and almost opposite me. But unfortunately I was so placed in the branch of a tree that I couldn't fire. A move one way or the other and I would have had a beautiful shot, but for the next few exciting moments not a move did he make. Suddenly a report rang out, and the next thing was the tiger charging straight at my tree. To this day I don't know and can't say what exactly happened, but swinging my rifle round and down in some extraordinary way I fired, and the tiger lay dead with a bullet in the back of his head at the foot of my tree. A second shot made doubly sure, and thus was the famous man-eater accounted for. A luckier shot was never made, and I verily believe that poor "stripes" must have run his head into the bullet. Fred, who was at the time about ninety yards away from me, told me afterwards that he waited for me to fire, and, seeing that I didn't, assumed that I couldn't, and, fearing lest the beast would escape, he risked the shot and let fly. However, all's well that ends well, and the rejoicing both amongst ourselves and the villagers was great indeed. To add to our enjoyment we now discovered that my wife had witnessed the whole affair. When the man came in for the servants, saying that the tiger was so close, she decided to try and see some of the fun, so ordering up the elephant, she got the mahout to take her out on some rising ground just outside the tent, and arrived there in the nick of time to see the tiger bowled



Photo. by Commander Barwick, R.I.M.

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER

The special feature of the picture is that neither myself nor my wife are in shooting kit. I am wearing white flannel trousers, and the few beaters assembled are nearly all our personal servants



over. He turned out to be the man-eater all right, for on turning him over we found that he had been already badly hit in the left forearm, and as a rule it is only a wounded or otherwise maimed animal that becomes a man-eater. Not being able to secure his ordinary prey in the shape of buffalo or deer he takes to humans, as being easier to stalk and kill, and they say that human flesh, once tasted, is so succulent and to their liking that they never again try any other variety. For the death of a tiger a Deputy Commissioner is authorised to pay a reward of fifty rupees. In the case of a man-eating tiger he can extend this reward up to a maximum of two hundred and fifty rupees. As he, on this occasion, immediately awarded and paid himself the maximum amount, there can be surely no doubt left in the minds of anyone concerning the identity of this tiger ! As a matter of fact it was soon placed beyond the realms of doubt, for the vital statistics of the District proved that this particular tiger had actually accounted for over forty humans, and after his demise there was no further loss, and the surrounding country roads, which for weeks past had been blocked, were again freely resorted to for traffic. It was a joyous party that at eleven that morning got into the buggy for our drive to the Rajnandgoan railway station, and on our arrival at Nagpur we at once proceeded to Government House to report our success to the Chief Commissioner.

The following day at the Town Hall the Famine Durbar was held, at which we duly attended. But, alas ! the list of honours was indeed a meagre one, and instead of rejoicing there was bitter disappointment. For the ex-

cessive labours of that year of horrors the officers of the Central Provinces Administration were not generously treated. Whether this was due to the Viceroy or to the Secretary of State, no one knew, but all felt that someone had blundered. It is seldom that civil officers have a chance of conducting a campaign such as this was, and when they get it and do the work well, surely the rewards might be at least commensurate with the work done. In the Central Provinces Commission, besides the Chief Commissioner, there are four Commissioners of Divisions and eighteen Deputy Commissioners in charge of Districts, besides a large number of Assistant Commissioners. The Honours list consisted of one Commissioner and two Deputy Commissioners. And the honour? A Kaisar-i-Hind medal of the first-class to the former, and one each of the second-class to the two Deputy Commissioners. Personally I have no cause to complain, for I was one of the two selected. But it was first the award itself, and secondly the number, to which such great exception was taken. Surely for a campaign of this magnitude and duration something better than a Kaisar-i-Hind medal might have been chosen, a decoration which, certainly as far as the silver one is concerned, seems to have been specially designed and reserved for worthy ladies employed on Zenana Mission work in India. To begin with, nobody that I have yet met with knows quite what it is, *i.e.* whether it is an order or a medal only. Apparently it is a sort of hybrid thing of recent growth, for which on receipt you sign a document undertaking to surrender it under certain conditions—a restriction which does not apply to an ordinary medal—and yet it carries with it nothing to

show that the recipient belongs to any order or has done anything in his service to merit such a distinction. I often think that when Lord Curzon invented it he lost a great opportunity of doing something better. For instance, take the D.S.O. of the army. When an officer carries these letters after his name—and mind you don't forget to give them to him—you know that he has served with distinction in war, and that he belongs to an order of which he is deservedly proud. Why not have formed a civil Distinguished Service Order, after the manner of the civil C.B., of which the civilian might have been equally proud. In my time I have done a little bit of war service for which I hold the Frontier medal, and a large bit of a Famine campaign for which I hold the Kaisar-i-Hind medal or order, or both, and I know which I value most, and which campaign I would prefer to take on again. But be this as it may, the fact remains that the whole Province felt aggrieved, and they attributed it to being located more or less in the back-blocks of India, and out of the sunlight. For we have the authority of the Famine Commission for saying that our work was well done, while in adjoining Presidencies, where the praise was not quite so universal, C.S.I.'s and C.I.E.'s were distributed somewhat freely; whereas the only C.I.E. awarded in our Province was, as far as I can remember, granted to Mr. E. Penny, the head of the Public Works Department. In my own District, two of my charge officers whom I had specially brought forward for good work received exactly the same distinction as that awarded to me. And they thoroughly deserved it, but somehow it doesn't seem altogether quite the thing, nor does it appear so to the native. Rumour

had it that the meagreness of our Honours list was entirely our own fault, for when in the previous year His Excellency Lord Curzon was touring in the Central Provinces he had had his leg pulled, and you can't pull Excellencies' legs in the East with impunity. The story is that he went to inspect a Plague Detention Camp at Nagpur, and having no patients in the hospital to show him, some silly subordinate took upon himself to fill several of the beds with some particularly fat and healthy-looking coolies. The fraud was discovered and—but no, perish such a thought.

We have a system in India by which parcels of goods ordered from shops or firms are delivered on receipt of payment of the bill to the postman delivering them. It is known as the "Value-payable-parcels-post," or in short the V.P.P. system. At the close of the Durbar, whilst being congratulated on my recent honour (?), some wag asked me whether the medal had been pinned on my breast, and, on my replying in the negative, he said, "Sorry, old chap, for they are bound to send it to you V.P.P." Another wanted to know whether I had received the insignia of the order of the K.I.C.K., and *where* I was going to wear it; while for my own part the solemnity of the occasion was best portrayed by my immediately sending the following telegram to the other hero who had been unable to appear in person: "Brother Kaiser, I greet thee, hoch-hoch-hoch!"

For successfully catering for the shooting-camp of a royal duke, a certain hotel proprietor in India—a foreigner—was made a member of the Royal Victorian Order, or in other words an M.V.O. For running one of the worst

famines of the century in a district of 11,000 square miles, and for feeding and keeping alive for a period of fourteen months anything from 150,000 to 250,000 people, the man responsible is given a Kaisar-i-Hind medal of the second class !!

CHAPTER XXVII

We proceed on two years' furlough—Military service abroad and in England—I proceed to Holland with the first M.C.C. team to tour out of England—I bowl over an Italian policeman—The South Coast Tour—Albert Trott's definition of an M.C.C. team—My wife goes to Australia—Her first nurse—Her second, and her sad end—
"Peace, perfect peace"

ON March 11, 1901, we went home on a well-earned rest of two years' furlough. After bidding goodbye to Myra Neild at Bombay, and seeing her safely off on her return to Australia, we ourselves took ship for England in one of the Austrian-Lloyd steamers bound to Trieste. I always made a custom of opening a bottle of the best and drinking to a successful leave on hearing the engine-room telegraph ring the order "full-speed" for home. And I knew directly I got the bottle on this occasion that I was for the first time in my life on a foreign ship. The champagne was sweet. We were, however, on the whole very comfortable and well looked after, and so anxious were the Company to do everything exactly to the liking of their English passengers, that we found as we sat down to our second breakfast, the steward had provided us with roast mutton and red-currant jelly! For a tour on the Continent, *i.e.* homeward bound from the East, Trieste is a capital starting-off place. After our recent experience of India we were in no mood for hurry, and making no regular plans or tour, we just decided to

take things leisurely and go from place to place as we thought fit. We spent a few days at Trieste, from there to Venice, and thence to the Swiss and Italian Lakes, the Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, Heidelberg, and on down the Rhine to Coblenz, across to Belgium, and finally to Paris, for the ever-needful hats, frocks, and frills. By this time we had put in a very pleasant two months visiting parts of Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and France, and, as I have always been interested in military matters, I made a point of visiting the parade grounds wherever we went, and seeing what I could for myself. Everywhere one found the manhood of the nation being trained to make their bodies physically as fit as possible, to drill and to learn the use of the rifle, and the farther we travelled North, the more impressed I became with the system of training. In our Colonies there is now compulsory service, and every schoolboy is a cadet. What are we doing in the old country to prepare ourselves for the day? Let me quote what I read in my local paper, *The Folkestone Herald*, on Christmas Day in the year of grace 1913:

“At the annual distribution of prizes in connection with ‘D’ Company, 4th Battalion the Buffs, Captain Atkinson stated that the strength of the Company should be 123, but it was actually only 83, and he asked those present whose job it was, and whom he saw before him in such large numbers, if the spirit of volunteering was dead. They wanted that night, he added, to raise 40 recruits to make the Company what it always had been and should be, the best in the battalion. At a later stage

of the proceedings, Lieut.-Col. Gosling asked if the spirit of patriotism no longer existed, adding that he did not believe it, and he would just put them to the test by asking how many would join 'D' Company, the Buffs. What was the response? At first it was absolutely nil. Yet there were present some hundreds of eligible young men, many of whom had made a point of arriving at the Town Hall before the doors were open in order to get a seat. They were quite eager to seize the opportunity of enjoying a free military display, but when it came to the point of enrolling themselves as Territorials they hid their diminished heads. For some time there was no reply whatever, and Colonel Gosling exclaimed: 'Is there no man here amongst 800 of you who has grit enough to serve his King and Country? Margate got 40 recruits in one night. Are you in Folkestone going to be beaten?' Colonel Gosling then mentioned that the previous week at Littlebourne they secured eight recruits out of some thirteen men. Eventually one lad came forward, followed soon by another, whilst at the close a third 'signed on.' Three recruits out of 800 eligibles! Well may it be asked, is patriotism waning? This, too, in Folkestone, an important town in the unconquered country, and itself proud of its traditions and associations as a member of the Cinque Ports. What are our young men doing?"

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Well may the question be asked, and where is the answer? It makes one who has lived his life abroad think a bit, and wonder whether everything is as it ought to be in the old country. Putting aside for the moment the

question of compulsory service—which, as the night follows the day, must come—why in God's name is it we are unable to follow the example of our Colonies and make it compulsory for every boy in a Government school to become a cadet? Surely the physical training alone entailed by this would do something to inculcate a spirit of discipline and obedience, and at the same time fill the lungs and expand the chests of the thin cadaverous cigarette-smoking weeds one finds at every turn in this Britain of ours, where Britons never shall be slaves! What, never? The British free-born must never be coerced, and yet here we have the still more free-born and independent Australian youth taking to military training like a duck to water. Yes, it makes one think a bit.

The Continent was all very beautiful and enjoyable, but to an Englishman returning from a prolonged residence in the plains of India there is nothing to compare with his first glimpse of the Cliffs of Dover, and his first peep at the English country scenery, even though that peep be taken out of the window of a dirty railway carriage belonging to the worst railway service in the world! It was early summer when we landed, and the mere sight of those dear old English hedgerows—the distinctive feature of English scenery, and to be found nowhere else in the world—was sufficient to make us realise that the “exiles” were once again “At Home.” After spending the season in London we eventually settled ourselves in a house in Surrey, where our first child was born. I amused myself principally with cricket, and later on with yachting. It was during this summer that I became a

member of the first M.C.C. team to leave England on a foreign tour. It was a team of the Gentlemen of the M.C.C. *versus* Holland, and we embarked for Holland on 11th August. Campbell Hulton—one of the best of good sportsmen and managers—was our skipper. I don't suppose there is a man living who has done more for what is termed second-class cricket in England than he has, and at the age of something considerably over sixty he is still skippering M.C.C. teams, and playing the good old game probably six days a week. More power to his elbow ; and I am right glad to find that as some recognition of his services he has now been made a member of the Committee at Lord's.

The late W. J. Ford was our official reporter, T. Atte-well our umpire, and amongst the team were such well-known cricketers as A. H. Hornby, F. H. Hollins, G. F. H. Berkeley, Capt. Jack Hulton, son of the skipper, Rev. S. W. Taylor-Jones, and Dr. Holton. The Hague was our headquarters, and in all we played four matches, one each against North and South Holland, and two against All Holland. With my assistance (please don't refer to the score sheets) the team was able to win all four matches, and I remember we much annoyed the "Great Ones" at Lord's by insisting on cabling home the results of the "Test Matches." The Dutchmen put up some very good cricket against us, and in C. J. Posthuma they possessed a bowler who could have played in any cricket. I still manage to play the good old game, but somehow here in Folkestone they don't, or won't, realise or believe that I ever was or could have been up to Test Match form ! I suppose I must put this down amongst other

grievances to Lloyd George. They may, on the other hand, be right, but, whether right or not, I remember making two of the best shots with oranges ever made by mortal man. It was in my bachelor days, and we were at the time on board a P. & O. ship awaiting at Brindisi the arrival of the mails for India. It was just after lunch, and being one of the second-class passengers, our quarters were aft in the stern of the ship. Below us and between the wharf and the ship were some "bum-boats" selling fruit and other confections to the passengers. While looking over the side, and contemplating the scene, we witnessed some outrageous behaviour on the part of an Italian policeman towards a woman. Being incensed at this we commenced flinging oranges at him. I flung two, one hitting him on the helmet, and, as he looked up, my second caught him fair and square in the right eye. His face was for the moment a sight. It was a real nice juicy orange and covered it. Well might he have uttered "some orange." But the result was serious. Within half an hour we had on board the head of the Brindisi Police, together with a large force of constables and detectives. They demanded of the captain the deliverance of the passenger who had so grossly insulted the Majesty of the Italian Law! Accompanied by the captain, who of course knew perfectly well who the real culprit was, they went through the entire ship in their attempt to discover him. But having been given a timely hint of their intention by one of Cook's interpreters, he had in the meantime hurried down to his cabin and effected a change into the latest thing in shooting-suits at that time discovered, and by

this means no doubt avoided a number of years of penal servitude in an Italian dungeon.

And talking of cricket reminds me of a good story told of Albert Trott, the celebrated Australian and Middlesex cricketer. As everyone knows, the Marylebone Cricket Club—otherwise known as Lord's—sends teams during the season to play throughout the Kingdom. It is done with a view to developing cricket, and as each team is invariably accompanied by three "professors"—one wicket-keeper and two bowlers—their matches are always looked forward to with interest, especially amongst the Schools. But there are M.C.C. teams and M.C.C. teams. One day you will find yourself playing in an eleven fit to take on any first-class County. The next—if you are not careful—one in which you will get a lot of leather-hunting. Any member can put his name down to play in any match in the book kept for the purpose at Lord's, and as there are necessarily a large number of "has beens" amongst them it is always advisable to know the skipper who is responsible for the selection of the team. A certain number of "has beens" you will generally have for this class of cricket, but when you get an eleven of them you are up against something it is better to avoid. Only this year I was a member of the South Coast touring team, one of the most delightful tours it is possible to make, and we played two-day matches at Tenterden, Rye, Hastings, and Eastbourne. In this team we had three—well, let us say elderly cricketers, D. C. Lee, the skipper, my old friend Campbell Hulton, and "yours truly." But for the rest D. C. had been careful to select some real good young 'uns and

some capable "professors." We therefore had a delightful tour, and won all our matches. On one occasion at Rye, going in for the second time, R. D. Cochrane and Dowling piled up over 300 runs before being separated. To do the "has beens" justice on this occasion, I may add we all made runs when they were badly wanted—Lee and Hulton both at Hastings, and myself at Tenterden and Rye. (You can see these score sheets.) Francis Ford, the England cricketer, and the hardest hitter to the off that ever lived, generally plays in and runs the Tenterden cricket week, so that both at Tenterden and Rye, which is quite close, you can rely on good cricket, while at the same time the social side is never neglected.

Playing one day at Canterbury, Albert Trott was asked what sort of a team he had for an M.C.C. match in which he had played a few days previously. Scratching his head, Albert said, "Oh yes, I remember, we had seven 'has beens,' three 'never wasses,' and Albert Trott!"

But after all, as the Poet has it (capital "P," Mr. Printer, please):

"I'd rather be a 'has been' than a
'Might have been' by far,
For a 'might have been' has never been,
But a 'has' was once an 'are.'"

In December 1902 my leave was up, and as our child was too young to travel it was decided that my wife should winter in the South of France, and, before rejoining me in India, make a long-promised visit to her relatives in Australia. For our firstborn we had taken every precaution to secure a first-rate nurse, and we considered

ourselves particularly fortunate in securing the services of a partially qualified hospital nurse with exceptional references, who had only given up the completion of her course owing to a break-down in health. When I bade good-bye to my family in London she was apparently everything that could be desired—cheerful, bright, and devoted to the child. It was only when outward bound in an Orient steamer to Australia that my wife began to get more and more anxious about her. Nothing seriously wrong could be noticed in her conduct either to herself or the child, but merely a growing discontent with everything and everybody on board. On the day of her landing at Melbourne she demanded an immediate release from her agreement. She was given it, and the following day she returned and in a flood of tears begged to be forgiven and taken on again. This was also conceded, but with the warning that a repetition of any such conduct could not be further tolerated. Within a week this poor unfortunate girl had to be confined in the Melbourne Lunatic Asylum as a dangerous lunatic, and she remains there to this day. We subsequently ascertained through the authorities that madness was prevalent in the family, and yet not a word of warning had been given to us, and, as my wife truly remarks, it was a dispensation of Providence that our child is still with us. In the following September I went down to meet them at Bombay on their return from Australia, and found that, in place of the poor girl left behind, May had brought with her a very charming Australian woman as nurse No. 2. But we were to have no luck with nurses. Being a strict teetotaller, and accustomed to drinking nothing but water

in her own country, nothing we could say or do would convince her that indiscriminate water-drinking in India was a dangerous thing. In your own household where all water is carefully boiled it is of course perfectly safe, but to take it, as she would insist on taking it, viz. at every halting-place we stopped at, and even at odd railway stations while travelling by train, was running a risk which no European should take. We were always liberally supplied with mineral waters, but to these she had an inveterate dislike, and maintained to the last that the water God supplied to the earth for people to drink had never yet killed anyone. Early in December she fell ill with typhoid fever, and by 19th January we had lost our second nurse. We became extremely fond of her, and in her death my kiddie lost one of her very best friends. For six weeks we nursed her night and day, and in spite of having two hospital nurses in attendance and calling in three different doctors, it was not to be, and nothing could save her. She was an exceptionally sweet woman, with very strong religious feelings. Her one aim and object was to get well and, as she said, try and repay us for any little trouble and expense we may have been put to on her account. It all seemed so sad, taking this girl away thousands of miles from her home only to lose her within a few months of her landing. I can see her now as she lay dying, perfectly happy and confident, and with her one hand in mine and the other in my wife's; her last words on this earth were "Peace, perfect peace." With her parents' permission we had these words engraved on the tombstone which now lies to her memory in the pretty little cemetery at Damoh. In India you die one day and

are buried the next, and so great had been the anxiety and strain on my wife that I decided to get away out of Damoh the very day of the funeral. I accordingly made arrangements to leave that day for camp, but must defer recording what took place there until I bring my own doings up to date.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Arrive at Bombay—Purchasing the nucleus of a stable—My first shooting camp in Damoh—Dr. Quinn's language in the machan—Our globe-trotter at work on a tiger—How he lost him—Tracking up a wounded tiger

IT was in December 1902 that I returned to India in the first of the special Delhi Durbar ships, and, as the Christmas holidays were on when we arrived at Bombay, I decided to make merry on Christmas Day at the Bombay Yacht Club, so well known and liked by everyone who has ever travelled to India. In the meantime my letters informed me that I was posted to the charge of the Damoh District which adjoins that of Jubbulpore, the headquarters of the Division of that name, and where the Annual Race Meeting was to be held the following September. For the first time at this Meeting there was to be a Chief Commissioners' Cup on offer, and as it was up to anyone in the Commission to lift it, I decided to make a bid for it. Accordingly each morning of my stay at Bombay found me round at the stables trying to select something which might prove useful. Eventually I picked out three waler ponies to add to my stable, two being young 'uns and only just off the ship, and the third a well-known racing pony by name Optical, with which I hoped to have a go for the Cup. Securing the services of a riding-boy from Poonah, I entrained with my charges, and on the

29th of December 1902 I took over charge of the Damoh District. One District in India is much like another, but Damoh being in the north of the Province, on the line of railway, and only about a third of the size of Chanda, I found the climate and the conveniences ever so much better, and the work ever so much lighter. The heat is never so great as down south, and the cold weather is both colder and longer. While in Bombay I had come across a great friend of my wife's who, together with a couple of guests, had just arrived from England for the purpose of witnessing the great Delhi Durbar of 1903. Lunching them one day at the Yacht Club, I suggested that when satiated with the pomp and gorgeousness of Delhi, and all that was to be seen there, they should, on their way home, pay me a visit and sample a little of the real Indian camp life, and that, provided they gave me sufficient notice, I would endeavour to entertain them with a tiger shoot.

On hearing from Delhi of their intention to visit me, I lost no time in making the necessary preparations, and in due course they arrived at my camp. The camp party consisted of the District Superintendent of Police and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Coles ; Dr. T. W. Quinn, the Civil Surgeon ; and a young brother of mine who happened to be stopping with me at the time. To these were now added my three other guests from home, who for the purposes of this book shall be known as Miss A, and Mr. and Mrs. B. Damoh was not the great shooting district Chanda was, and I was none too confident that I should be able to keep my word as to the tiger. But Quinn and Coles knew the District from A to Z, and the

spot for the camp had been well selected at Ghat Piparia. On the second day after their arrival we had our first kill, and Miss A's heart was made glad within her with the presentation of her first tiger skin. And she, moreover, had the intense satisfaction of seeing the animal killed, for she was in the *machan*¹ with Quinn when he shot it. And thereby hangs a tale. T. W. Q., or "Dockie," as we invariably called him, was, as may be inferred from his name, an Irishman. He was a capital chap, with a heart like a hotel, especially for the fair sex, and he and Miss A were before this shoot the best of friends, but then to our astonishment, even in spite of the gift of the tiger skin, we noticed that there was a decided coldness. Something had happened, but we knew not what until Miss A herself forgave him and enlightened our curiosity. Now, as I have already said, T. W. Q. was an excellent chap, and a born shikari, but when there was a tiger about it was the tiger first and the rest nowhere. On this occasion the tiger broke out very quietly, and Quinn, who was standing up in the *machan* with Miss A sitting at his feet in front of him, saw it before she did. It is absolutely essential when tiger-shooting to remain quiet and speechless. Suddenly the tiger appeared in all his majesty before Miss A, who in her excitement, imagining that the doctor had not seen it, clutched him by the knee and cried excitedly, "Dr. Quinn! Dr. Quinn! the tiger!" "Shut your d—d mouth." Bang, and the tiger dropped dead in his tracks with a bullet through his brain. The estrangement was of course of a very temporary character, and the momentary rudeness quickly

¹ A sort of rough seat rigged up in the branches of a tree.

forgiven. They remained for the rest of the time the best of friends, and I have no doubt that when Miss A contemplates her trophy in her beautiful home down south, she appreciates the fact that when shooting silence is golden, and laughs at T. W. Q.'s peremptory demand of her to adhere to it.

And that reminds me of another good story about T. W. Q. which, though it occurred long afterwards, may well be told here. Quinn was a bachelor, and he and poor Coles frequently had heated arguments which I sometimes feared would lead to a breach of the peace. It was in the middle of particularly hot grilling weather, when we in Damoh were seated as usual outside the Damoh Club one evening after tennis, discussing the heat and the many drawbacks of India at that time of the year. Quinn, having as usual a slap at Coles, said: "Well, I know one thing, and that is if I were a married man instead of keeping my wife to grill in the heat of the plains I should insist upon her taking six months' leave every year." "Dockie, she'd want it, wouldn't she?" was Mrs. Coles' only comment. Quinn's face was a study. He was pulverised, and the situation was once again saved by the tact of this witty and clever little lady.

But to get back to our shoot. Two days after our first tiger we got another kill, and the guns for this beat were arranged as follows: Mr. B and Miss A, Dr. Quinn and Mrs. B, my young brother Atwell and Miss A's maid, myself and Mrs. Coles; Mr. Coles, who was suffering from fever that day, remaining behind in camp. The beat was entirely successful, and the tiger came out to Mr. B who got the shot. But in attempting to emulate

Quinn, who it must be remembered dropped his tiger with a bullet through the *brain*, thus rendering any second shot unnecessary, he stupidly refrained from letting him have his second barrel. My machan was next to his, and I was inwardly praying for a second report as I could distinctly hear the tiger talking. Nothing came, then suddenly "bang, bang"—and we never saw that tiger again from that day to this. And here was a pretty kettle of fish. Four ladies in the beat and a wounded tiger at their feet; for it is not difficult to imagine that in a dense jungle it is a sheer impossibility to locate a wounded animal, and nothing is simpler than to walk actually on to him without knowing it. Sounding my small tandem horn, which was a signal for all beaters to immediately take to the trees, we waited in the hope of one or other of the guns getting a second shot at the tiger. But after waiting for some time without result, Quinn and I, together with my shikari, Futteh Khan, decided to get down and see what could be done. On reaching the spot where the tiger had been hit we discovered some blood which Quinn diagnosed as lung blood, so that we had the satisfaction of feeling that our friend must be badly wounded and possibly lying up at that very moment in his death agony. After ascertaining from the beaters in the trees that nothing could be seen moving, we got the womenfolk down and escorted them out of the jungle to a place of safety. Then ordering some buffaloes to be collected, we sat down to a scratch lunch. Later on, and as soon as the buffaloes could be gathered together, Quinn, B, and self, leaving Atwell to look after the safety of the ladies, went back to the jungle to try and walk up the wounded

tiger. Now, provided you shoot straight and avoid taking stupid risks, tiger-shooting is not the dangerous game people at home are inclined to imagine it to be. You are perched in a tree, out of reach of any tiger, and provided you kill him outright, there you are and there he is, and you walk back to camp delighted with the result. Tiger-shooting only becomes dangerous when you have to follow up a wounded animal, and as all wounded tigers become man-eaters, it is a point of honour to do all in your power to make an end of him. A great help to you on an occasion of this sort is the enlistment of the services of the ordinary village buffalo. Once get a herd of buffaloes on to the hot blood of a wounded tiger, and then the danger to you is rather from them than from the tiger. For they will never leave him. With their heads all lowered on the hot scent of their deadly enemy they see red, and in their excitement they may easily injure you unless you keep well to their rear. In the present case, however, they were useless. Either they did not, or could not, pick up the scent properly, or the ground was too broken for them to work in concert. Neither with the efforts of their herdsmen nor with any persuasion of ours could they be induced to take the slightest interest in the proceedings, until at last we all came to the conclusion that the tiger must have left the jungle. Even as we were consulting, a roar which seemed within a few yards of us, greeted our ears. It drove the men and cattle in a confused mass back on us, and for a moment, had he only followed up his advantage, he could have enjoyed himself. But he didn't, and not another sound did he make nor a sight could we get of him. We continued moving slowly

forward until it was late and, under the circumstances, too dangerous to proceed further. I called a halt and we left the jungle and rejoined the ladies. We found Miss A, who had heard the recent roar, in a high state of excitement, and coming up to me she said in an agitated manner, "Mr. Coxon, what are we going to do?" I replied: "Get on the elephants and return to camp." To this she said, "Surely you couldn't think of doing that, as we might walk right on to the wounded tiger!" Seeing the state of mind she was in I thought any old lie would serve, so forthwith proceeded to explain that when a tiger was wounded it went immediately to water. The only water in the vicinity lay due *south*, some two miles distant, and, as the tiger was now there and our camp lay at a distance of three miles in the *opposite* direction, there was not the remotest possibility of coming across him. The words were hardly out of my mouth when to my dismay a second roar came from the mouth of that infernal tiger not fifty yards away and sufficient to awake the dead! Dropping into an adjacent seat, Miss A said: "Mr. Coxon, I don't care where I sleep or who I sleep with. Nothing will induce me to go back to camp to-night!" She said it in all simplicity, and I don't suppose for a moment that she knew she had said it. Quinn again came to the rescue, and between us we eventually persuaded her to be guided by us, and all returned safely to camp in time for dinner. Next morning Quinn and I were off at daylight on the tracks of our overnight friend, and, although Coles and my brother joined in the hunt the day following, and we kept at it for three successive days, we never again saw or heard of that tiger.

To show how slightly wounded he was, and how even a doctor can be misled by a rough-and-ready diagnosis of blood, it may be mentioned that on the second day of our tracking we came across a spot where the tiger had jumped some ten feet into a sandy nullah, and from the upward track in the sand we could plainly see that the beast had merely been slightly hit in the near foreleg. But this the sportsman who shot him never knew, for by this time he and his party were on their way home. It was a great pity, for by failing to put the contents of his second barrel into him he lost the only opportunity he is ever likely to have of bagging a tiger. Strangely enough since my retirement into private life, and only some three years ago, Futteh Khan, my old shikari, wrote me a letter saying that he thought this very tiger had recently been killed by one of Lord Kitchener's staff. It appeared that His Excellency and staff had been shooting in the Damoh District, and had bagged a tiger which had been previously wounded by a bullet in the left forepaw. This was some six years after our camp, and probably Futteh Khan was right. For it is only when a tiger has been so badly wounded as to interfere with the pursuit of his natural prey that he takes to man-killing, and no man-eating tiger had been reported in the District up to the time of my leaving it.

Poor Harry Coles ! this was the second wounded tiger he had been after, and the third was to be the death of him. Some three years ago he was following up another, when he was seized and so badly mauled that when they got him to camp they had to build a small hut over him where he lay on the ground. He couldn't even be lifted.



H. E. Coles Mrs. Coles A. J. Coles
OUR BREAKFAST TABLE IN THE GARDEN AT DAMOH

Photo. by Author



His poor wife was with him when the doctors arrived in response to her summons. They found that to do any good at all they would have had to amputate both legs and one arm. Mercifully, death came to release him from such an ordeal.

CHAPTER XXIX

The Race Meeting at Jubbulpore—I score four wins out of six events—
The Marble Rocks and the bees—Sir John Hewett's gymkhana—
I take part in the cockade fight—The Syce's letter to his master
—Another from a Babu—We bag our biggest panther—Our
third nurse joins us in camp—And yet a fourth

ALL this time I was busy getting my new ponies into shape, and once the ground allowed of their being trained I was out every morning at five o'clock with my riding-boy giving them their exercise. It goes without saying that in a small District like Damoh there was nothing in the shape of a race-course, but a few miles out we managed to prepare a rough track over some fields which made quite a good substitute. On such a course it was, however, impossible to tune the ponies up to concert pitch, so accordingly some three weeks before the meeting they were sent in to Capt. Sitwell, R.A., a pal of mine at Jubbulpore, to have them properly galloped. "Optical" was entered for the Chief Commissioners' Cup, "Shamrock" for the Steeplechase, and "Kitty" for one of the other events. Early in September I went down, as already stated in a previous chapter, to Bombay to meet my wife, and returned with her to Jubbulpore just in time for the Meeting. Unfortunately my stud had not been sent into Jubbulpore in time to get sufficient of what we call in India *sixteen-anna* galloping, so we had to remain content with a second in the Chief Commissioners' Cup.

Shamrock also ran second in the Steeplechase, while Kitty was unplaced.

But the Meeting was such a success that they were able to arrange for an extra day's racing at the end of the week, and the few days' extra training worked wonders in the Damoh stable. The three ponies were entered for four out of the six events on the card, and won all four ! "Optical" won the "Visitors' Plate," "Shamrock" the Steeplechase and the "Novice Stakes," while "Kitty" ran away with the "Hunt Cup Stakes"; and my wife's arm got quite tired leading in the winners ! It was a great Meeting for me, and more than justified my selection at Bombay. Having married a "Waler" I am a thorough believer in them, and on this occasion I pinned my faith to my stable. I supported them in the lotteries and backed them in the ring, with the result that we all returned to Damoh with happy faces and well-filled purses. For polo-racing or pig-sticking give me walers every time, and yet not so many years ago it was difficult to get anyone to admit that anything could be the superior of the Arab. The race "Optical" won was worth going a long way to see, and it was quite the best race of the Meeting. All the cracks were in it, and though he started at 8 to 1, being beautifully ridden, he just managed to slip through and win by a neck on the post ; while you could have placed the proverbial large sheet over the heads of the first six horses. Sir John Hewett, K.C.S.I., who was afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, and who has only recently retired, was at that time Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, and as I had known him in Calcutta while acting as Private

Secretary in Bengal, he was most kind and hospitable to us. Amongst other things he invited us to a picnic he gave at the celebrated Marble Rocks on the banks of the Nerbudda river. The white cliffs are formed of magnesium limestone and are in many places over a hundred feet in height, while the water in the river is said to be one hundred and fifty feet deep. The effect of the sun on the gleaming faces and rifts is extremely picturesque, but in bright moonlight the gorge is worth going a long way to see. A peculiar feature of these rocks is the enormous number of wild bees and their nests, which are to be found on the rocks on both sides of the gorge which runs for a distance of over a mile. Numerous notices are posted up here, both in English and the vernacular, warning all visitors not to smoke or to fire guns, or to make any noise which would be likely to disturb these bees, for, small as they are, they can be made into dangerous enemies. On one occasion a boat-load of "Tommies," I believe belonging to the Gloucestershire regiment, ignored these notices and insisted on smoking. Of the seven men in the boat five were drowned. The bees came down on them and attacked them. Being driven nearly mad by the pain of the numerous stings they received, they took to the water, and as soon as their heads appeared above the stream down came myriads of bees on each one, until at last only two men escaped to tell the tale.

And mention of Sir John Hewett's name reminds me that just previous to this Race Meeting I was at Jubbulpore attending a conference when he gave his first "At Home" as Chief Commissioner. It consisted of a gym-

khana in the Government House grounds, and as Sir John's A.D.C. had only just joined his appointment, and was therefore quite new to the work, Mr. Fox Strangways, the Commissioner, with whom I was stopping at the time, suggested that I should lend the A.D.C. a hand at running it. For one of the events we had a cockade fight, and as it is a capital event and one that is not often seen out of India, a brief account of it may be of interest. In the present case it was a battle-royal between the Military and Civil, and being one of the latter engaged in it, I have good reason to remember it. It consists of four men mounted on each side, wearing a fencing-mask with a cockade stuck in the top of it, and armed with fencing-sticks. At a given word the combatants set to, and the side who first knock all the cockades off their opponents' heads are the victors. On the civil side we had my good friends Sir Charles Cleveland, H. F. Hallifax of Famine fame, and another. All were good horsemen, and in Cleveland we had probably the biggest and strongest man in the Province. I pinned my faith on him, and hoped to stick close to his strong right arm for protection, for we were up against a doughty side. To my horror in the very first round both Cleveland and Hallifax had to retire with the loss of their cockades, leaving only two of the civil to face three of the army in the second round. As we engaged, my companion's cockade was immediately struck clean off, and I was left alone to continue the combat and to be belaboured by three big and bloodthirsty ruffians ! All I could do was to try and protect my cockade with my stick, the while praying hard that each successive blow would knock the beastly

thing off. As I write I can feel my body tingling with the mere thought of those few painful minutes, and only once did I dare to get a bit of my own back. Seizing an opportunity, and rising in my stirrups, I with all the strength at my command came down with my stick on an upraised arm and nearly broke it. At the moment I hoped I had killed him. In a flash off flew my cockade, and our side was beaten at two to one and I to the condition of a badly-made jelly.

Sir John was a most punctilious man, and later on in the evening, when I was lying in my room under a punkah, and with never a thing on but a headache with a wet bandage round it, his A.D.C. was sent in uniform to convey to me the Chief Commissioner's official thanks for the assistance I had rendered him during the afternoon. Rising up in my "altogether" to return the aide's salute, we were astonished to find that my pillow was covered with blood, the fact being that the pattern of the wire-protected ventilating-hole in the top of the helmet had been beaten into the back of my skull! Yes, they were stalwart warriors with strong arms, were these representatives of His Majesty in the War Department, and for once Charles Cleveland was a disappointment to me. It was at Jubbulpore on this occasion that I met a man who told me a good story typical of the Indian petition-writer, to which I have already more than once referred. He was one of those with a nice little stud of racing ponies, and on going to the Hills on leave, he had left his head *syce*¹ in charge of them, with instructions as to their daily exercise, &c., and to write him at once in case of any trouble or

¹ Groom.

accident. He had not been in the Hills very long before he received the following letter :

“HONOURED SIR,—The little horse ‘Scamp’ which you left in my charge yesterday developed a devil-may-care attitude. Tossing me off he entirely alluded my custody and has gone right away out of my sight. My God how annoying ! ”

One often hears funny stories of these people, but all I have given are absolute facts. And here is another from a man who was instrumental in getting a Babu employment in the Railway Department as a sub-stationmaster. In writing to him to convey to him his thanks, the Babu ended up his letter in the following manner :

“St. Paul followed our Lord and became an Apostle ; I have followed you, my lord, and have become a sub-stationmaster. Curious coincidence ! ”

It was on the 19th of January 1903 we lost our second nurse. She was buried on the morning of the 20th, and that very afternoon saw us ten miles out of Damoh in our first camp of the season. Knowing that it was not a bad place for sambhur, and with a view to divert my wife's thoughts from the terrible experience of the last few weeks, I arranged a beat for the following morning. We only had about a dozen beaters all told, and feeling confident that if anything at all came out it would only be a harmless sambhur, we sat on the ground reading our newly-arrived English picture-papers, intending to climb up into the machan only when we heard the beaters approaching. Suddenly I heard a sharp bark, and knowing it to be that of a sambhur, which in the daytime is invariably a danger-

signal, I immediately got my wife up into the machan, and followed as quickly as possible myself. No sooner had I got my rifle into my hand than the largest panther I have ever bagged charged past on the exact spot where a moment before my wife had been sitting quietly reading her *Tatler*. In fact the paper itself was there on the ground, where it had been hurriedly left. He charged by at such a pace and loomed so large, that when Futteh Khan came up I couldn't say whether it was a tiger or a panther I had fired at. He was hit, for as he passed us he answered to the shot, but the rifle was only a small one, and it was necessary to be careful. Ordering the beaters into trees we examined the blood marks in the long grass, and so high up was this that Futteh Khan was convinced it must be a tiger. We tracked him for about a hundred yards to a nullah, and then, finding no further sign of him, decided to return to camp for buffaloes. Our tents were only about a mile off and, getting the elephant up, we were only some twenty minutes on the journey home. Within another twenty minutes we found to our astonishment all the beaters trooping in after us carrying in triumph the dead panther. As already stated, we had tracked the beast to a nullah, and it was in this very nullah that "spots" had crawled to die. It was the sharp eye of a beater from the top of a tree which had discovered him.

Before leaving Damoh my wife had inserted an advertisement in the *Pioneer* newspaper for a European nurse. A number of applications for the post had been received. From these we selected one and, as her credentials were entirely satisfactory, had engaged her and sent money to her for travelling expenses. It was some weeks after



Photo. by Author

THE "LADY OF THE LIFT" IN CAMP KIT



the incident recorded above that she arrived, and, ye Gods! I can see her arriving now! Our camp was on the bank of a river, and I was standing just by the bank when the tonga drove up and the new European nurse got out. I nearly fell in. Though rejoicing in the European name of Evangeline Smith, she was as black as Jack Johnson the pugilist! and dressed à l'anglaise, looked for all the world like one of those dressed-up monkeys you see on a barrel-organ! She was a terrible creature, and in addition to that awful *chi-chi* talk which invariably drives me mad whenever I hear it, she had the appetite of an alligator and the swallow of a thirsty camel. Unlike the poor dear girl we had lost, she would not touch water, and insisted on "limoneede," as she called it, and we could scarcely keep her in it. While we were in camp we had to make the best of her, but directly we returned to Damoh we packed her off to her European parents, and personally, I think she was fortunate to reach them alive; for what between her appetite, which seemed never to be satisfied, and her apings of her European sisters, she was enough to try the temper of a saint. And our fourth attempt at a nurse for our child was little better, and in fact it was not until our return to England that we really got anything satisfactory. She certainly was an English girl, the daughter of a sergeant in the army, and an extremely pretty girl at that. But she was young and foolish, and gave us infinite worry with her airs and graces while up at Simla. The truth is it is next to impossible in India to get anything in the shape of an English nurse or maid, and if you want one, the safest and shortest way in the long run is to import her from England.

CHAPTER XXX

The death of a hero—Snakes—I witness a combat between a mongoose and a daman in the jungle—Characteristic distinctions between the tiger and the panther as seen from a machan in the jungle—The mystery of the peafowl—Coles explains, and I witness an amusing sight—Sitting over a tiger kill—Driven off my venture by vultures

IT was in the succeeding hot weather, when my wife and family were up in the hills at Simla, that the tombstone which we erected to the memory of our late nurse was placed in the pretty little cemetery at Damoh. In this very cemetery there lies a stone to the memory of a man who must have been something out of the ordinary. I forget his name, but years ago he was the District Superintendent of Police of the District, and had a perfect mania for snakes. In fact he bred them, and his house was literally full of these reptiles. One evening, while handling some of his pets, he was bitten by a cobra. Being entirely by himself at the time, and knowing that he was a dying man and quite beyond the reach of help, he quietly sat down and, divesting himself of his coat and shirt, placed his open watch upon the table in front of him. Taking paper and pencil he wrote out exactly what had occurred, saying that as there was no hope for him, it might be of scientific interest and to the welfare of others coming after him if he recorded the symptoms he would experience before losing consciousness. Even if I could remember them it would be too gruesome to record

the entries here, but it is easy to picture this fine fellow, sitting there at his table a doomed man, writing for posterity the sufferings he was enduring until a splutter of ink, and the pen falls from his fingers! Surely that splendid epitaph recorded and set up in the Antarctic would be suitable to this man's grave:

"Hereabouts lies a very gallant gentleman."

And who but that rescue party could have thought of such an epitaph? the very finest ever written to one of the finest acts ever performed by mortal man.

Talking of snakes reminds me of a few more or less exciting incidents which occurred to me during my service in the East, and which, though not in chronological order, may as well be inserted. The first was away back in the Burma days. We had been out on a long tour, and arriving back in Rangoon very early one morning, I found in my office an accumulation of boxes from the Secretariat containing cases for the orders of the Governor. All these boxes were sent up to Government House under lock and key, and it was part of my duty to open them personally, and put them up before him in order of urgency. As we arrived only in time for a bath previous to breakfast, I made a hurried inspection of them in order to get all those marked with a red flag—which denoted urgent matters—ready for my Chief as soon as he commenced work. Putting my hand into one box I caught hold of something slimy, and fortunately slammed the lid. Calling up some *chuprassis*¹ with sticks, the box was taken outside on to the drive and there, reopening it, out crawled a *krait*, which is about the most deadly poisonous snake

¹ Orderlies.

in the East. He is only a nasty little beast from twelve to sixteen inches in length, but his bite is fatal, and had I caught him by the head instead of by the tail, as I might easily have done, I would have been a dead man within half an hour. The second escape was at Chanda. I had been dining out one evening in the hot weather, and returned to the bungalow feeling cheap and tired. Calling for my bearer, he took my boots off and brought me my slippers. But before putting them on to my feet, Peter—native like—slapped the two slippers together, when out dropped another krait. My third adventure with a snake also occurred at Chanda, but though even more serious and exciting than the other two, the details of the incident are such as unfortunately to exclude them being put into print. But in a period of over twenty years' service in India, these are the only near things I have ever had with snakes—and after all, as they were only incidents, the danger from snakes in India, where one is expected to tread upon them daily, is clearly much exaggerated. On the other hand, I once witnessed a scene in connection with a snake which few, if any, men have seen, and that was a fight in the jungle between a snake and a mongoose. I was out duck-shooting at the time, and had only a native orderly with me. On the whole we had enjoyed excellent sport, but a large wounded bird which was clearly not a red-headed pochard, and which separated from the flock, attracted my attention and I determined to try and get him. We marked him settle in a tank which we knew existed about a mile away. On reaching it we mounted the "band" or bank of the tank to locate him. Then in the act of jumping

down again we saw a curious sight. There below me was a mongoose endeavouring to kill a "daman," a large snake, but of the rat-killing and non-poisonous order. Motioning my chuprassi to remain still and silent, we for a few moments were eye-witnesses of the combat. The daman was stalking along with his head erect, all the time endeavouring to enmesh the mongoose in the coils of his tail, with the evident intention of squeezing him to death after the manner of the python. The mongoose, on the other hand, was merely contenting himself with jumping across the snake's body from side to side immediately behind his head, each time just taking a nip out of the back of his neck as he went to and fro. The blood could be seen trickling from the wound, and I suppose the end would have been—failing a successful grip by the snake—the decapitation of its head. Unfortunately, either the chuprassi moved, or the mongoose spotted us, and we were unable to see the fight to a finish. He disappeared into some hole, and I shot the snake, which measured over eight feet in length.

We were a very small party in Damoh this hot weather, and as both Coles and myself preferred a tent to the bungalow, we did a certain amount of joint camping. Now it stands to reason that when one is away in the interior of the District, and out of reach of tinned provisions, you must rely to a great extent on what your gun procures for you. Young peafowl are very nice and succulent, but, as they live chiefly in scrub jungle, and never fly if they can possibly avoid it, they are extremely difficult to get. And yet Coles was always amply provided with the luxury. It beat me entirely. We were often out

shooting together in the morning and again in the evening. We shot other things, but never peafowl, and yet here it was *ad lib.* on his table. Where did it come from?

But before enlightening you on this point, let me just for a moment discuss the peculiar and distinctive characteristic of the panther as against the tiger, as seen by everyone who has done any big-game shooting in India. For it bears on the story regarding the secret of Coles' camp supply of peafowl. Like most men who have done any tiger-shooting, I have seen the tiger come out—always on the alert, but leisurely and on the prowl, and also excited and charging. And though the sight of a charging tiger is a magnificent one, you see him at his best when coming at his ease. Provided the sportsman keeps absolutely quiet and immovable in his machan, he will notice that the tiger never looks above his own level. Being accustomed to find his prey on the ground, such as deer and buffalo, his eyes are at their level, and, unless a noise or move attracts his attention, he will never look above it. And another gift of nature which he has in common with the panther is, that in spite of his size you will never hear him until you see him. In the hot weather where the jungle is covered with broken twigs and withered teak leaves which will bark to the tread of a small bird, this huge brute is enabled by nature to negotiate them without the slightest audible noise. Should a panther come out in the beat—with the same conditions prevailing—you will notice that he will inspect carefully every hole and tree-trunk, and peer into the branch of every tree he passes. Why? Simply because his prey is everywhere, and he feeds just as often, and

perhaps more frequently, on monkeys, peafowl, and other animals which make their abode in trees, and close to the ground. In fact, as Sir Samuel Baker says in his book on *Wild Beasts and their Ways*, the panther as often as not during the day seeks refuge either in a tree-trunk or on its branches, while the sportsman as a rule is totally oblivious to the possibility of such an existence. To my mind the tiger is the gentleman of the jungle, and a magnificent brute, while the panther is a sneaking, thieving scavenger, fit only to be exterminated as vermin whenever met with. But perhaps I speak feelingly, for I have cause to loathe him, as will be later on explained. I have shot a number of them in my time, but as it usually involves sitting up over a kill for many weary hours, of late years, and until I met with my accident, I had quite given up going after them. But in the meantime let us return to Coles and his commissariat and the secret thereof. The provider of the peafowl turned out to be a certain police constable, to whom was given a gun and as many cartridges as peafowl were required for the pot, and that number, no more, no less, was brought in. The *modus operandi* was as follows; and had I not personally witnessed the proceedings would have written them down as bunkum. The three of us went out one evening to a spot where the constable knew he would find the birds feeding. On arriving in the vicinity, he placed us in a good position for observing his movements, and then, divesting himself of his clothing, he wriggled along the earth on his belly to the cover of some bushes, where he put on over his head what I afterwards ascertained was intended as a mask repre-

sending the face of a panther. It was of his own making, and though as unlike a panther as anything I have seen, it was good enough to hoodwink the birds. It was painted yellow and had spots on it, and that was all that could be said for it ; but once it started work the effect was magical. Spotting some birds through the bottom of a bush, our constable friend adjusted his mask, and then raising himself until the mask was to be clearly distinguished above it, he started a sort of weird tango, at one moment showing his head and then suddenly withdrawing it, and then giving it a horizontal movement, until at last, an old cock viewing him, the fun began. First one bird then another uttered angry mocks of disapproval, and finally the effect was such as to be downright comical. You have no doubt seen a flock of sheep butting their heads and stamping their feet at some strange dog or person approaching them. Well, for sheep substitute some sixty or seventy peafowl cocks, hens, and young 'uns, all vehemently protesting against the presence of this stranger, and you have in your mind's eye what we actually saw in front of us. Whether hypnotised or terror-stricken, or a little of both, I know not, but the fact remains that all further thought of food was postponed, and the more the mask danced the more energetic and assertive became the birds, until I verily believe the constable could have put his hand out and caught what he required. But Ali Khan had his orders to supply four young and tender birds, and accordingly he awaited his opportunity for selection, and when, after the firing was over, we went down to inspect the bag, there sure enough were the four fat and tender young



Photo. by Author

THE PANTHER POLICEMAN PANDERING TO PEA-FOWL



birds shot by the panther policeman. No wonder Coles had plenty of peafowl for the pot, and the method of killing them goes to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that the panther feeds on them, and is able to catch them by means of some mesmeric influence.

And this panther episode reminds me of an experience I had once when sitting over a tiger kill. Properly speaking it should have been recorded in the Chanda chapters, for it happened there, but it was only while writing on the peculiar traits of these two animals that the incident came back to my memory. While in camp in the Chanda zamindaris, Jingru reported one morning that he had discovered the carcase of a large boar which had evidently been killed by a tiger, and as he thought there was every probability that the tiger would return that evening for his repast, induced me to sit over it. Accordingly about two o'clock in the afternoon saw me seated in my machan in an adjacent tree. From the state of the ground it was clear that there had been a tremendous tussle. There was a considerable amount of blood about, and pieces of tiger fluff here and there showed that the damage was not altogether on one side. In fact it is quite probable that the tiger's failure to return that evening to the kill was due to injuries received in the conflict, while the gallant old boar had only been given his quietus by having every one of his legs broken in several places.

Sitting over a kill is not the exciting work beating is, for you have to remain absolutely still for hours at a time and exercise a great amount of patience. But on this occasion, though no tiger came, I was presented with an illustration of jungle life which is probably unique. Just

as the light was fading, and I was thinking of descending from my tree and returning to camp, a large king-vulture appeared upon the scene, and was shortly followed by another. Where they came from Heaven only knows, for not a sign or sound of a living thing had been seen or heard during the hours I had been sitting in my tree. But they appeared to know their business, and started waddling round the kill and talking to each other. Then came a peculiar sort of call or whistle from one or other, and suddenly the dead carcase of the pig became a seething mass of feathers and fury consisting of a huge pyramid of vultures all screeching and struggling with each other in their greed to get the first dainty morsels. It was a disgusting and yet at the same time a marvellous sight. And here had I been sitting for hours the companion of these loathsome birds, without even knowing that there was one within a mile of me. The two king-vultures were evidently sent on as advance scouts, but what seemed strange was that while the orgy of food was being indulged in by the rest of the feathered community, they still remained hopping round them as if on sentry-go. My nose, however, gave me early intimation that it was time to be off. It is marvellous what short work vultures will make of a dead carcase, and when I took my last look upon the scene, in addition to those that had secured huge portions of the entrails of the poor old porker and went screaming away with them, the pyramid over the carcase was some eight to ten feet high. There must have been at least one hundred and fifty of them. What repulsive creatures they are to be sure, and yet as scavengers how useful ! And what would India do without them ?

CHAPTER XXXI

A District Magistrate in India—The scandal of rape cases—A *cause célèbre* at Damoh—The Police Inspector's visit to me after the trial—Flogging a rascal—Civil case work—Land Revenue work: the way I settled a long-standing dispute—A similar case between two Bengal Rajahs

A DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, as the chief magistrate of the District, is naturally responsible for everything pertaining to the criminal courts in his District, and in addition to having all the appellate and revision work of his subordinate courts, there is a considerable amount on the original side to get through. For he naturally retains on his own file all the more important cases of dacoity, murder, and such like. It's all very interesting, but the one amazing and regrettable feature of the criminal courts in India, and one which forms the bane of existence to all magistrates empowered to deal with them, is the extraordinary number of false rape cases filed by Indian women. It is a hideous crime with which to charge a man at any time, and yet it is one which would appear to be resorted to as a matter of course if a woman has a grudge against one of the opposite sex. It goes without saying that such cases are filed as a rule by women of no character, but as in the eyes of the law the word of the rich and poor, high and low, have the same value, the complaint has to be accepted as true, until the contrary is proved. Many of these complaints do not even stand the light of pre-

liminary inquiry, and are dismissed without calling upon the defendant to reply. On the other hand, there are others which have to go through the full course of a trial, taking up a large portion of a magistrate's valuable time, and entailing distress and inconvenience to the parties concerned; only to be dismissed in the end as utterly false and contemptible. Evidence is cheap in India, and witnesses are easily purchased for a few annas a day, so that this system of blackmail is one which is easily resorted to. Of the many cases of the sort I have myself tried I can only remember bringing in a man guilty on two occasions, and one of these was upset on appeal. But to show that this class of case is not entirely confined to women of bad character, I may perhaps be allowed to quote one which proved to be quite a *cause célèbre* at Damoh. It was in fact the last important case I tried as a District magistrate in India. One afternoon, while busy at work in my bungalow, an orderly came in to say that a woman had driven in from a long distance and desired to see me on urgent and important business. On going out on to my verandah to interview her, I found her lying prostrate on the ground, holding her petition in her hand, and weeping bitterly. She was in such a state of nervous trepidation that it was some time before I could induce her to talk coherently. At last she managed, amidst many tears, to tell me her story. It was the same sad pitiful one, but in the present case the complainant was a young and rich widow, the part-owner of several villages, and the defendant one of my best police officers. In the ordinary course, it would have been this woman's duty to file her complaint at the nearest police office, but,

being so bitterly wronged, she had elected at very great inconvenience to herself to undertake a long journey for the express purpose of laying her grievance before the head of the District. Her story was to the effect that some days previously she had occasion to lodge a complaint of defamation of character against another woman in her village, and that a certain police officer who had been sent out to investigate the circumstances of the case on the spot had committed this assault upon her. It was given with such preciseness of detail, and with such a true ring about it, that after recording the corroborating evidence of witnesses, I had no alternative but to issue a warrant of arrest against the sub-inspector—an officer in whom, I may add, we all had the very greatest confidence. Well, the case duly came on for trial, and the longer it lasted the blacker and more conclusive it became against the accused. It appeared that while engaged investigating the charge of defamation of character, he had in the course of the afternoon recorded this woman's statement, and, becoming enamoured of her charms, had, on the pretence of requiring further evidence from her, sent for her in the middle of the night, and on getting her into his private quarters had committed the alleged offence. Witnesses were produced, her own friends and neighbours and servants all testifying to the fact that she had been called by the sub-inspector in the middle of the night, that they had accompanied her to his house and had seen her enter it. Above all, there were eye-witnesses to the actual assault, and no cross-examination could shake them in their statements. But as is usual in these false cases there was just too much evidence, and through it,

and by the merest fluke, this beautifully-built edifice of lies came toppling about the heads of its builders. One of the last witnesses for the prosecution to be called was the woman's own uncle, and he it was who, by an admission of his, gave the whole show away. In the course of his statement, which corroborated all that had been given by the previous witnesses, the uncle said that so greatly did he feel the outrage which had been perpetrated on his niece, that he went off himself to report the matter to the nearest police office! I at the time attached no importance to this part of the evidence, but merely asked my clerk-of-court to show me the report which should have been filed with the proceedings. It was not forthcoming. No particular importance was attached even to this omission, and at the conclusion of the day's sitting I merely recorded an order in the order-sheet for a copy of it to be filed at the next hearing. And yet it was the filing of this report which saved the inspector and knocked the bottom out of as vile a case as was ever conceived out of hell. Here we had in the accused a man of long service and exemplary character as a police officer, and one who had by his excellent work earned our complete confidence, charged by a lady of considerable standing in the District with the most grievous offence, next to murder, with which a man can be charged, and which if proved would not only entail loss of position, pay, and pension, but would render him liable to a sentence of seven years' penal servitude. And as far as the case had then gone, I had not a shadow of doubt that the inspector was a guilty man and would be convicted. It was the two separate reports—the recording of the second

of which the woman apparently knew nothing about—which brought about the *débâcle*, for whereas she had come direct from the scene of her disgrace to lay her complaint regarding the charge of rape at the feet of the Deputy Commissioner in person, her uncle had gone the next afternoon, *i.e.* more than twelve hours after the alleged midnight occurrence, and had reported to the police that he was not going to stand having *his niece's ears boxed by a police officer before the whole village!* There was even no second or subsequent report about the midnight outrage. Not a word about his niece's enforced journey to the inspector's bungalow. Not a word about rape. And yet in court we have this hoary-headed old ruffian, departing entirely from his original report to the police, and having been carefully coached, corroborating every word that had been already given by the previous witnesses for the prosecution. It was impossible for both reports to be correct, and it was subsequently ascertained beyond a shadow of doubt that the uncle's original one to the police was a true account of what had actually taken place.

While investigating the defamation case the inspector had ascertained that the moral character of the lady who had made the complaint was not of the best, and in recording her deposition he mentioned the fact that as she had been living for a considerable time with her own nephew, she was hardly a fit and proper person to bring a charge of such a kind against another woman in the same village. He offered it purely as a piece of advice to her, but the widow, taking umbrage at the remark, retaliated by saying, "Well, from the look of you I would say that

you are the sort of person who would prefer to live with his own sister ! ” Hardly ladylike, and for her trouble she got her ears boxed by the irate inspector of police. Hence this diabolical charge of rape. Needless to say it gave me great pleasure to be able to acquit the accused, and at the same time to record an order directing the complainant, together with a number of her witnesses—not forgetting the uncle—to be prosecuted for perjury. The parties to the case were well known in the town of Damoh, and the court was crowded when judgment was delivered. And when, after the sub-inspector’s release from custody, I found he was being carried home shoulder high by his friends and relatives, I felt quite as pleased as they did.

A somewhat touching incident followed the acquittal in this case. The following morning I was informed that the sub-inspector desired to see me, when to my astonishment he appeared before me in mufti instead of in uniform. This being contrary to standing orders I naturally inquired the cause, when the sub-inspector, saluting me, said : “ Sahib, from my experience of courts I know that magistrates frequently find themselves compelled to acquit an accused person when they honestly believe him to be guilty. Unless then, Sahib, you assure me that you are confident of my innocence in this matter, I have brought you my uniform and my sword and lay them at your feet, as being no longer a fit and proper person to wear them.” Suiting his action to his word, he did so. Taking them from the ground I assisted him on with his tunic, and buckling his sword round his waist, I shook him by the hand and congratulated him on his

fortunate escape. It furthermore gave me great pleasure later on to be able to send in a report on his conduct which secured him promotion.

The second conviction for this offence to which I refer above was a perfectly ghastly case. Going into Court one day I was annoyed to find that the complainant was not present, and still more annoyed when I was told that my eyes were deceiving me and that she was there. Looking over my desk I found a little naked child of five years of age playing with my boots, and she was the complainant. I gave the prisoner seven years' transportation to the Andamans—the highest sentence I could award, and I am glad to say the conviction and sentence were upheld on appeal; but I would much like to have made the punishment fit the crime. In the Colonies to this day rape with violence is a hanging matter, and so it should be.

The only other criminal case of any interest I can recall is one in which I inflicted a flogging on a horrible rascal. Having had a very long and particularly trying day in Court I was annoyed to find that just as I was leaving for home there was yet another case for disposal still on my file. It was of course up to me to adjourn it until the following day, but finding that it was one which could be disposed of under my summary powers I decided to deal with it at once. Calling the case on, I found the prisoner was a gentleman I had long been anxious to get to grips with. He was the local bazaar bully, the terror of the town, and constantly being run in before the subordinate magistrates for robbing and ill-treating women and children. It took me no time to come to a decision in

his case, and I sentenced him to be flogged with a flogging of thirty stripes. Now under the law no magistrate can inflict a sentence of flogging except with the sanction, and in the presence of, a certified medical officer. But being myself "the law," and anxious to get home to my dinner, I decided against any further vexatious delay, and as the prisoner was a big burly ruffian whose corpus seemed to ask for a beating, the risk to be run was not in my opinion worth thinking about. And from what I have said it will be gathered that I wanted to make an example of him. I did. So sending for a convict warder whom I knew to be a bit of an expert in the flogging line I bade him to his business and to do it well. And he did. So well, in fact, that when the prisoner was untied he fell down flat on his stomach in a dead faint. Various weird native remedies were resorted to without effect, and even a couple of buckets of water failed to rouse him. I was fairly at a loss to know what to do next until a happy inspiration induced me to sing out in a loud voice in the vernacular "to tie the badmash up again and give him another thirty stripes." Jumping to his feet in a flash he was up and off like a black buck which has just had a near thing from a sporting rifle. I never saw a man run faster, and as we watched him cross the maidan we were all convulsed with laughter. He ran through the town and out of it, and as long as I remained in Damoh he never returned to it, and for all I know to the contrary he may now be where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. But wherever he is he was a wicked rascal, and only got what he richly deserved.

As regards the civil side of work in India, I am

thankful to say that we of the executive have now little or nothing to do with it. The reliability of evidence tendered in these courts is much the same as that given in criminal courts, only more so, for whereas in the latter courts the witness always lays himself open to a prosecution for perjury, the same amount of risk does not attach to him in a civil court, and it is frequently the litigant with the biggest purse who wins his case. Natives of India simply love litigation, and it appeals to them as Auction Bridge or any other sort of gambling does to the present-day European. Once they take up a case they will spend their last farthing rather than lose it. On the Revenue side, where we executive officers again come into our own, the same gambling spirit applies, and even more so. For a native is more tenacious about his land than about anything. Fortunately, however, in these cases the result depends more on records and documents, and the same facilities for the hard swearing of witnesses do not exist. To illustrate what I mean about the keenness of natives regarding land, I well remember taking on my file as an Assistant a partition case which had then lasted considerably over a year. The property in question consisted of a number of villages which had been inherited by two brothers, who, agreeing to divide it, and not being able to come to a satisfactory settlement of the question between themselves, had applied to a Revenue court for a partition. After continued haggling, extending over many hearings and at great cost to themselves, everything had been satisfactorily arranged with the single exception of a small well with a few mango trees round it. They could not divide this well, and yet

neither brother would give way, and it was at this stage that the case came on to my file. Adjournment after adjournment was granted, and at each hearing all my persuasive eloquence failed to effect a solution of the dispute. At last, growing desperate, and to avoid a long duration in my court, I said in so many words, "Look here, you two fellows, this is all tommy rot. You're wasting my time and your own, in addition to much good money. Here in my hand I hold two matches, a long one and a short one. Whoever of you draws the long one gets the well, and, to compensate the brother, pays one hundred rupees to charity on his behalf." They drew and the case was closed.

A somewhat similar land dispute, only on a very much larger scale, occurred during my time as Private Secretary in Bengal. It was between two very rich zamindars, but the actual area of the land in question was very similar to the case already quoted. For the final hearing of the case the biggest counsel in Calcutta had been briefed. His fee was a sum of five thousand rupees before setting foot in a railway carriage, and one thousand a day while the case lasted. It was expected to be over in the course of a few days, and during the visit the counsel was to be the honoured guest in the Rajah's guest-house. It occupied exactly a month, and the counsel returned to Calcutta with Rs. 35,000 in his pocket !

CHAPTER XXXII

District Durbar for the presentation of an honour for services rendered in the Mutiny !—The dear old Judge and the sambhur—A shooting camp in the middle of the hot weather—How to distinguish between a tiger and a panther kill—A little bit of excitement with Futteh Khan—I bag my last tiger

EARLY in the year 1904 Mr. Coles fell ill, and it was with the greatest regret that we found that he and his wife were compelled to go home on long furlough. We had been a happy little family in the District for over three years, and we were all very sorry to bid them good-bye. In April I obtained three months' leave, and spent it with my wife and child in the hills at Simla. It was a question whether we should go to Cashmere or Simla, but, for the sake of the child, we decided on the latter. It had long been our wish to visit Cashmere, and we lost a chance then which never recurred. It was on my return from this leave that I found orders awaiting me to go out on a mission so very typical, it seems to me, of the extraordinary way we have at times of doing things. Amongst the titular honours bestowed on native gentlemen for services rendered to the Government, there is one called the *Rai Bahadur*. And it was to bestow this honour that I was ordered to proceed into camp as soon as possible. There was to be no delay. A District Durbar was to be held, and the Deputy Commissioner in person was to present the *Sanad*, amidst as much pomp and ceremony as circumstances would admit, and a

report of the proceedings was to be forwarded to the Government on the completion of the ceremony. The orders were successfully carried out, and the Sanad of "Rai Bahadur" conferred on the gentleman selected. He was a dear old fellow and a great friend of mine. His age was eighty-six. He was quite blind and stone deaf, and the honour was granted to him for distinguished service rendered by him to the Government in the Mutiny! *There was to be no delay!*

Having a few Australian friends coming to us for Christmas, we arranged to try and make our annual Christmas shooting camp as festive as possible. And while the possibility of getting anything big was remote, there were great hopes of mixing up pleasant companionship and conviviality with a good general bag. Our guests included the two Misses Peacock of Adelaide, the Honourable Mr. Justice Russell of Bombay, and his brother, Colonel Bruce Russell, R.E., with my old friend Quinn and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, the new policeman and his wife, vice the Coles gone home. The anticipation as regards big game proved unfortunately only too true, for no tiger, panther, or bear came our way. On the other hand we secured a good general bag, and for the rest, it turned out to be the most enjoyable camp I ever remember having experienced while in India. The Judge and the girls were the life and soul of the party, and for ten days we made merry and bright. The dear old Judge, owing to defective eyesight, was not the best of shots, and from what we could see of his shooting, seemed to be too partial to ends. On one occasion, while in a machan with my wife, he got a perfect sitter at a cheetal stag standing



Photo by J. D. G. 7

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WITH HIS MUTINY VETERAN ON HIS RIGHT



quite still only about thirty yards off. He let fly and knocked off the extreme end of his right horn. On another occasion, while beating on foot a small patch of jungle, a shot rang out, followed by a charge of a magnificent sambhur stag, which was bowled over by Colonel Russell in right good fashion with a right and left. It was just what the Colonel had been longing for, as he had never yet shot a sambhur, and on measuring this one we found he was a magnificent beast with a forty-inch horn. While in the act of contemplating his trophy, a laboured tread was heard approaching, and then a voice calling: "My bird, Bruce," and sure enough we found that he had hit him with the first shot fired. The mark of the bullet was on his hoof! True the Judge tried hard to make his brother take the trophy, but once having seen the "hit," nothing would induce him to do so, in spite of their being the best of friends. In fact we one and all agreed that we had never before known of a closer friendship than that which existed between these two brothers, and it was quite delightful to see it. They were the very greatest chums. And we have in our house a very handsome set of gold liqueur-glasses, as a souvenir of the Christmas camp of 1904, from the brothers Russell, which we prize greatly.

Before the hot weather came on we lost Dr. Quinn, on transfer to another District, and being again alone and preferring the shelter of a tent in the jungle to the monotony of life in a bungalow at headquarters, with all my old friends gone, I decided to remain in camp until compelled by force of circumstances to return to Damoh. The Judge had promised to come and spend a month with

me, and in place of his brother, Bruce, who was unable at the last moment to turn up, I invited Colonel Peyton, who, at the time, was in command of the 15th Hussars. We forgathered on the 16th of May, not far from our old camp, but on this occasion we had definite khubber of a tiger. In spite, however, of tempting baits in the shape of fat young buffaloes being tied up for him in every direction, we could not get a kill. Futteh Khan was indefatigable in his efforts, but at the end of a week, though we knew the tiger was still about, we were no nearer the realisation of our hopes. At last, one day we got him in a beat, but he broke through without our seeing him. We tried another, and he got away again, and great was the disgust of both Russell and Peyton when, after taking counsel with Futteh Khan, I decided against a third attempt. All the way home on the elephant it was drummed into me that owing to my pig-headedness we had lost the last chance of ever bagging that tiger. But it was my shoot, and they had to make the best of a bad job, and home we went. That night we tied up all round the tract we had been beating during the day, and when the news came early next morning that there was a kill, the apologies from my pals were more than ample. The tactics and greater knowledge of Futteh Khan were more than vindicated. Jingru, my old Gond shikari of Chanda, was a better tracker, but for knowledge of the game give me Futteh Khan. He was a splendid fellow, as staunch as steel and as keen as mustard. Now, it may be asked, how, when a buffalo is killed, it can be ascertained that a tiger has killed it. It is a question easily answered, for when a tiger kills, he immediately

starts feeding on the hindquarters of the animal he has killed, whereas a panther or leopard tears open the belly of its prey, and makes its first meal on the viscera, commencing generally with the heart, lungs, and liver. We left camp early that morning on the elephant, full of hope, which was not disappointed. Drawing for places it was found that, while I was to be the centre gun, Peyton, who was on my left, was in the favoured position, as the cover was better and everything pointed to the tiger taking that line of advance. Before getting into position Futteh Khan came to me, and giving me good reasons for supposing that this tiger was the identical one we had wounded in a former camp, already described in these pages, I asked both guns to be careful, and so as to avoid danger to the beaters, not to risk anything in the shape of a wild shot. Lending Futteh Khan my second rifle as an extra precaution, he went back to start the beat. No sooner had he done so than there was a loud roar, followed by a shot from Futteh Khan, and yells from the beaters, and away on the extreme right past the Judge came a charging tiger. He swung round towards me, and I let fly at about ninety yards' distance. He was hit, for he answered to it, but never even wavered in his stride, and disappeared from view. Here was I, responsible for everything, ignoring my shikari's request and my undertaking to my friends, and taking what I can only describe as a silly-ass sort of a shot, or even worse. Entirely through my own fault we had another wounded tiger in the beat. Blowing my horn—the usual signal to the beaters to take to the trees—and telling Peyton and Russell to remain where they were for the present,

I got down and joined Futteh Khan. My own opinion was that I had hit the tiger well behind, and with any luck might have injured one or possibly both thighs, and if this were the case there would be little danger of a sudden spring. As we were both armed we decided to follow carefully in the direction he had taken and see what we could see. Crawling along, and taking advantage of every little bit of cover, we made for a forest boundary mark consisting of a cairn of stones, from which we hoped we might be able to take stock of our immediate vicinity. No sooner had we reached it than cries of *bagh, bagh*, came from the stops in the trees. Both of us went automatically on the knee, expecting a charge, but nothing came. Next we were informed that the tiger could be seen lying down about fifty yards ahead of us. Crawling along, again on our bellies, a few paces at a time, we at last got sight of him, but to our astonishment he was tail on to us, and neither could get a shot at him. I then made for the shelter of a tree on my immediate right, and resting my rifle on its trunk and drawing a careful bead, told Futteh Khan to chuck a stone at him. He did so ; but no move. A second stone followed, with a similar result, only this time it hit the tiger, and we then realised that our prey was lying stone dead in his tracks ! To account for his death, I couldn't, nor could any of us after an examination of the corpse. The bullet had not touched either thigh, as I had hoped, but it had penetrated clean through its stomach, and, as far as we could ascertain, no vital spot had been touched. The heart, the spine, and the brain were all intact, and the tiger's death was a mystery which none of us could



MY LAST TIGER

The intense heat can almost be seen in this picture. It was on this particular day in June 121° in the shade, and it will be noticed that I have substituted a towel for the ordinary handkerchief of civilisation



at the time solve. So, carefully packing up all the viscera, it was despatched that night by the Judge to a doctor friend of his in Bombay, and a few days later our minds were set at ease by learning that a small portion of the explosive bullet which had been used had penetrated the *aorta* or main artery. This was my second lucky shot, and I have yet to record still another, and a final one, the luckiest of the lot. The tiger was not, after all, our old friend, for he turned out to be quite a fine specimen and unwounded or hurt in any way. He showed temper from the first, simply because he had been disturbed more than once lately, and was getting tired of it, and I verily believe that had we had our third beat the day before he would have gone clean away out of our ken. My shikari told us that the shot he had fired at the commencement of the beat had in reality saved the life of a beater upon whom the tiger had turned. Under the circumstances the Judge was perfectly right in not taking the very wild shot he was offered by the charging tiger, and had any accident occurred the blame would have been mine and mine alone.

“All’s well that ends well” is however a good motto, and we all returned to camp very pleased with each other and with our luck, for we had worked hard for it. In the picture showing the death of my last tiger, the heat experienced can almost be felt, but if there is any doubt about it, look well into it and it will be observed that in place of the ordinary white handkerchief I am carrying a towel.

CHAPTER XXXIII

My sister-in-law arrives from Australia—Her arrival at Damoh—Bob's stalk after a black buck—The scavenging system of India—A promising start—Bob gets her first and only experience of big-game shooting—A panther extended ; a second one in the beat—My wonderful escape from a nasty death—A long and painful jaunt in a dhoolie—An entertaining conversation I am forced to listen to—Arrive at Jubbulpore and put up with my old friend Hallifax—I proceed to Calcutta

MY wife had for long wanted to get her sister, Mrs. Claude Hamilton, up on a visit to us from Australia, and at last everything, to our great delight, had been satisfactorily arranged. As already mentioned in the early part of this book, the two women were mother and daughter and sisters all in one, and their love and devotion for each other is something quite out of the common and difficult to conceive. It made it hard in those days to be so many thousand miles apart. It makes it even harder now for them to be so many more thousand miles away from each other. But *que voulez-vous?* and we must get back to India. On the return of my wife and family from Simla, early in October, definite plans were made to give Beatrice the time of her life. Being an Australian, she was a sportswoman, and could ride or drive anything, and we knew that camp life would suit her down to the ground. Accordingly we had settled on going into camp as soon after she arrived as possible, and invitations had already been issued for a Christmas gathering such as we had never yet attempted. In January we

were to camp right through the District, and towards the end of that month the two sisters were to make a tour of all the most interesting places in India, taking in north as well as south, and ending up with a season in Simla. Man proposes and God disposes, and never was a saying more literally rendered than this one was by the tragedy which was subsequently enacted, and which started within a fortnight of her arrival. But so that the blow which fell can be properly appreciated, I may say that I am no less devoted to my sister-in-law than my wife is. Not only are we both very fond of her, but we are also very proud of her, for it was not so many years ago that her picture was with two others sent home to London as representing the three most beautiful women in Australia. Please remember this fact when you hear what happened to her. Not being able to spare time to get away, May went down to Bombay to meet Beatrice, and my good old friend Judge Russell entertained them there most royally. After seeing all there was to be seen in that direction, they returned home by the mail train which arrived at Damoh at nine o'clock at night. I was at the station to meet them in my buggy and pair, and drove them home up an illuminated road to an illuminated bungalow, where we sat down to an excellent dinner, and drank to the success of the visit, and to the best of sport, in the best of bubbly water. So far so good, and Bob (for we always call her Bob) began to imagine she had arrived in fairyland. The shikar news was good, the weather all that could be desired, and after a week's rest in Damoh, we made a move for camp, and a camp which proved to be the last camp I ever had in India. Within a week I had been

mauled by a panther ; within three weeks we were all down in Calcutta, I in one hospital undergoing successive operations, Bob at death's door in another with smallpox, and my wife almost distracted in a hotel, with her child, not knowing at what moment more bad news might be received from one or other hospital ! Of the three I verily believe my wife's case was the worst, for what she must have gone through in those few weeks at Calcutta is beyond imagination. But now to record events as they occurred. Leaving Damoh towards the end of November, we had a drive along the main road to our first camp. On the way we sighted a herd of black buck, and Bob, who was as keen as mustard, insisted upon our stopping and having a stalk. It is an everyday occurrence during the camping season in India, but I mention this particular one, as it gives a capital illustration of the wonderful system of scavenging in vogue in that interesting country. Leaving May to look after the buggy—for she had already done many a stalk with me—Bob and I went off, and before long succeeded in bowling over quite a good stag. This occurred about mid-day. We returned to the buggy, and had a drive of about a couple of miles to our tents. Arriving there, I sent my shikari with some coolies to bring in the black buck, and in the meantime sat down to lunch. From the time this animal was shot, to the time it was brought to the tents, the interval could not have exceeded a couple of hours, and yet, when it arrived, I am not exaggerating a bit when I say that there was nothing of it left beyond the head, the skin, and the skeleton. In that time every morsel of flesh had been picked from the carcase and eaten by vultures and jackals, and the

skeleton was so cleanly picked that it could have been sent as it was to any museum. The following day we had an excellent day's duck shooting, and at our next camp I bagged another black buck, which stands for the record of the District, having horns which measured just under twenty-six inches. So you see we had made a most promising start, and everybody was enjoying every moment of the day. A couple of days later we came across Mr. Sharp, of the Educational Department, in camp, and as he was going in our direction for part of the way, we joined forces. And it was while with him that dear old Bob got her first and last experience of big-game shooting. Getting khubber of some bears in the neighbourhood, we went out and took up our positions in a dry river-bed, my wife and Mr. Sharp being in a machan on one side of the river, while Bob and I sat on a sort of promontory of rock on the other. The beat started, and the luck was with us, for the bears came our side. I got a right and a left at two of them, dropping one dead and wounding the other. It didn't stop him, however, and as he was making for a place where a cave was known to exist, I jumped down from where we were sitting on to a ledge about ten feet below, where I could command the entrance. On handing me my rifle Beatrice said: "Look out, Stan, he is coming for you," and sure enough the little beggar was, and he only gave me sufficient time to ram in a couple of cartridges and finish him off at a distance of about three yards. Bob's excitement was great, and her first taste of shikar much to her liking. We secured both bears, and the second one now graces her home in Australia. An extraordinary thing about

these sloth bears is that, though they look harmless and inoffensive creatures, natives of India treat them with greater respect, and hold them in more fear, than they do a tiger or even a panther. For the latter—unless, of course, he happens to be a man-eater—is not aggressive, and his natural instinct on facing a human is to retreat rather than to advance. Not so the bear, however, for he will frequently make for a native on sight, and when with their young they are invariably dangerous. Many a native have I found badly damaged by bears in the various Government hospitals I have been inspecting, and frequently cases in which their scalps have been completely ripped off their heads by the long claws of these enraged creatures. And yet, on the other hand, more of them are kept as pets in India than perhaps any other animal. I never cared for them myself, but there is a very good story told of a fellow who took one of these pets home with him to England. I suppose it was the change of climate did not agree with him, but, whatever the cause, Bruin fell ill and caused his master much anxiety, as nothing he could think of seemed to do him any good. At last, hearing of the arrival in the vicinity of a travelling menagerie, he went off to interview the proprietor and invoke his assistance. Nothing loth to do a good turn, and at the same time earn an honourable fee, the “Zoo” man interviewed the sick bear, and locating the trouble to his digestive organs, prescribed a ball. Now everybody living in India knows, or should know, how to give a ball to a horse or a dog, but it is quite another thing to be asked to dose a bear, and even the owner in this case had to be enlightened. He was to

provide himself with a piece of rubber tubing about a yard long, smear one end of it well over with molasses, of which all bears are inordinately fond, and put the molasses end in the bear's mouth. Then while Bruin was greedily engaged licking his chops with delight over the tasty morsel the owner was to seize the other end of the tube, insert the ball, watch his chance, and—blow. He did as he was instructed, and some days afterwards the Zoo proprietor and the owner of the bear met, the latter to the former's astonishment looking like nothing on earth. On inquiring the cause the sick one with a melancholy moan remarked, "The d—d bear blew first!" Parting company with Mr. Sharp the following day, we had a long and tiring march to our next camp; and both ladies decided on passing a quiet evening in the tents. The information at this halt was that there was yet another bear about, and accordingly early the next morning I went out to try and account for him. He was in the beat all right, but didn't present himself to be shot at, so having a good deal of work to do, I returned to camp, leaving directions that I would be out again in the evening to have another beat. This time it was decided to beat up a dry river-bed about a couple of miles away from the morning beat, to which place the bear had been tracked by the trackers. About four o'clock saw me in my machan, and the beat commenced, but instead of the bear we were expecting, a panther appeared. Coming to the edge of a bit of cover, he hesitated, and then finding the beaters still coming on, made a bolt for it across the open. It was the first time I had ever seen a panther extended, and it was not a pretty sight. Instead of charging, after the manner of a tiger, he seemed to wriggle along the ground on his

belly, as if ashamed to expose himself ; and yet he came at a great pace. But the shot told, and being hit just behind the head, he turned a complete somersault, and lay stone dead just below my tree. As I fired I heard something else in the beat charging by out of sight, so assuming that it might be the bear we were out after, we decided on having a second beat of another bend in the river. Leaving the beaters with the kill, and taking a few stops with me, we endeavoured to find a tree in which to place the machan, but devil a one could we find, so planting myself on a flat ledge of rock about ten feet below the river bank, I sent the men back to start the beat. Within a few minutes of their starting, the monkeys by their terrified yapping gave me timely intimation that something big was on the move. To properly understand the situation, it must be borne in mind that the place we were beating was a large dry river-bed, the banks of which were roughly forty feet in height, that the rock on which I was sitting was flat, and that my right shoulder was to the bank, and my left to the river ; or rather where the river should have been, for at this season of the year there was not a drop of water in it. My rifle was across my knees, and my eyes and my whole attention fixed towards that portion of the river-bed which lay to my left front, from which direction I expected the animal, whatever it was, would come. Suddenly something moved to my right, and looking up, I saw a panther crawling along the top of the bank. My involuntary movement stopped him, and he crouched as if for a spring. Whether he would have sprung or passed on matters not. The beast had already been disturbed twice, and was now in his second beat, no doubt, much

to his annoyance. All that I can say is that my action was automatic. The whole thing occurred like a flash. My rifle swung round, and I fired to save my life, and as I fired the panther was on my head and I knew no more. How long I remained in the position in which I found myself I shall never know, but recovering consciousness, every detail of the accident came back to me. I found myself lying face downwards on my stomach at the bottom of the river, and the first thing I saw was my large '577 rifle lying broken and useless in front of me, while my leg and shoulder were so damaged that I couldn't move. Where was the panther? Looking over my right shoulder, there the beast was within a few feet of me, and still alive! It looked as if I was in for a cheery time. There was nothing for it but to lie absolutely still and watch him, the while he was growling and snarling and trying to get at me, but somehow and to my relief without success. Then in a spasm of rage and pain he flung his left forepaw into his mouth and nearly bit it in half. As he did so a great gush of blood came from his side, and I then knew that my sort of snipe-shot up above must have taken effect. This was my third lucky shot, and it undoubtedly saved my life, for the panther died and I didn't. But what a relief the sight of that blood was, and how I gloated over mine enemy as I watched him in his dying agony! There was no sickly sentimentalism about me on that occasion, for the beat was still coming on, and no sooner did I see his last dying kick, and the last breath from his beastly body, than I blew my whistle for all I was worth to stop it; for it was quite on the cards that he might have had yet

another pal to come and interview me. We had already been keeping company for fully three or four minutes, and you can take it from me that the arrival of my men and the quick removal to a place of safety was a very welcome change.

Yes, it certainly was a marvellously lucky escape—for you see it was, in reality, a triple escape. When the panther first sprang on me one of his teeth scored my forehead right across it, thereby showing that had there been any support to my back, as there usually is when in a tree, he would have bitten my head off. Escape No. 1. From the spot where I was sitting to the place where my men found me was afterwards measured, and it was found to be over thirty-one feet. The fall was on to the bare bed-rock of the river, and there was nothing to break it. The doctors who afterwards treated me in Calcutta declare that I must have fallen actually on top of the panther, otherwise my back or my neck or my legs must have been broken. And the third escape was, of course, the fact that we lay sufficiently far apart, while watching each other, to prevent his playing with me, as no doubt he would have liked to do.

In the meantime the first panther had been taken to camp, where my wife and sister both were, and the only remark the former made was: "That's rather funny, as Stan usually precedes anything he shoots!" The next thing was, native-like, a wild man arriving and shouting that I had been killed or so mauled that there was but little left of me to identify the carcass. Like children, natives have no sense of proportion, and must make the worst of anything in the shape of alarming news. For-



Photo. by F. Weston & Co.

MY LAST PANTHER WITH MY TWO DAUGHTERS, DOREN AND PATRICIA



tunately they had two "Bush" women to deal with, who, in their time, had been used to rely on themselves, and when I arrived in camp everything was ready for me. Water was boiling, sheets had been torn up as bandages, and all sorts of palliatives and antiseptic dressings prepared. Futteh Khan was not at the time with me, but in old Bholi Singh and Sidhi, my two shooting orderlies, I had two thoroughly reliable men; and no professional nurses could have carried me in with greater care and kindness, or with less pain. The first precaution I took myself was only a natural one, and that was, on finding myself weak and inclined to faint, a good big swig of raw whisky out of my flask, and a thorough scouring with the same good and useful liquid of the surface wound on my forehead. The jaunt into camp was not altogether a thing of joy, but it was a relief to me to be able to signal to my wife that I was still alive and kicking; for my knowledge of native ways convinced me of the sort of news that would have gone on ahead. A mounted orderly had already been sent off for medical assistance, and a dhoolie to carry me back to Damoh; and though there was not much in the way of sleep for anyone in the camp that night, everything that was humanly possible to alleviate pain was done for me. The next morning an early start was made on the return journey—myself in the dhoolie and the ladies riding alongside. We had to push along, and our first halt was at a place called Hatta, a distance of thirty miles, where, on arrival, we were glad to find the Civil Surgeon. As already stated, my old friend Quinn had left the District, and in his place a native officer of the Indian Medical Service had been appointed, who,

though kind and attentive, didn't inspire me with much confidence. But at Hatta there was a telegraph office, and May took the precaution of wiring to Jubbulpore for the Civil Surgeon of that District to be sent out to meet me on my arrival at Damoh. It was another long and painful march, with many halts for rest, and though we got away punctually at six in the morning, it was past ten o'clock that night before we arrived at our bungalow. The following morning Colonel Hendley, I.M.S., arrived by the mid-day train, and after an examination of my foot, declared that he would have to put me under chloroform to try and ascertain what had occurred. It was my first experience of chloroform, and it was certainly a funny one. Captain Chitale, the native surgeon, administered the anæsthetic, while Colonel Hendley examined the limb. In the middle of this preliminary investigation I came to my senses and heard the following highly interesting and entertaining conversation :

Colonel Hendley irately: "Give him more chloroform."

The native surgeon at my head: "Colonel, I cannot give more chloroform, his heart is stopping beating and he will die."

The Colonel at the other end of the bed: "Give him more chloroform, and let him die and be damned!"

Grateful and refreshing as Lloyd George's fruit, and amidst these tidings of comfort and of joy, and in the most hellish pain, I swooned off again into a state of unconsciousness; when, so they told me afterwards, my language was too awful to listen to. The result of this investigation was nil, and Colonel Hendley assured us

that there was nothing for it but to take me into Jubbulpore, where they had an apology for an X-ray apparatus which might perhaps define the extent of the damage to the foot. Accordingly that same night saw us again on the move. We left Damoh by the midnight train and arrived at Jubbulpore at nine the next morning. My good friend Hallifax, who was at the time Sessions Judge of the Jubbulpore Division, met us at the station and insisted upon taking me to his own house, where of course we were treated with every kindness and hospitality. A medical board assembled and with the X-ray apparatus did all that was possible, but the instrument was only used at the College for purposes of tuition, and the skiograph obtained was insufficient to show anything definite; and no further information could be obtained. At that time there was but one really up-to-date apparatus in India, and as this was at the Calcutta hospital, Colonel Hendley strongly recommended us to proceed there at once. We had then been detained at Jubbulpore for three days, and as the limb was getting bigger and bigger, further delay was dangerous, and there was nothing for it but to move on. On the fourth morning I was carried to the station in a sort of cot specially made for the purpose, and taken as I was bodily into a first-class compartment. But it was the mail train between Bombay and Calcutta and waited only a few minutes at Jubbulpore. The cot was unfortunately too large to be taken in by the carriage door, and I had to be shoved in a great hurry through the window. The pain of this move was intense and for the second time I swooned off, only to wake up to find myself and my wife well on our way to the Calcutta hospital.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Calcutta hospital—My first operation—My second operation
My wife and Bob visit me at the hospital on their way to the ball
at Government House—My sister-in-law down with smallpox—
We emerge from our respective hospitals—The dressings to my
foot cause me infinite pain, which I attempt to describe to a pal—
My friend the Austrian count—I hold a reception at the Belvedere
garden-party—My panther song

ALL that day and all the next we travelled by that train to Calcutta, and it was not until ten o'clock on the second night that we arrived at the Sealdah station. And yet the worst part of the journey was still to come. For, to convey me to the hospital, they had sent a sort of meat-safe on wheels—drawn only by coolies—into which I was bundled as so much luggage which is “not wanted on the voyage.” The vehicle consisted of a black box fixed on wheels, entirely without springs, and from which you could neither see nor speak to anybody. In the railway carriage my foot had been made fairly comfortable in a sort of swing rest provided by the medical authorities at Jubbulpore. But there was no room for it in the meat-safe, and as the distance from the station to the hospital was fully five miles, and it took a good hour to accomplish, the mode of transit appeared not only intolerably painful, but the journey itself interminable. Never having been in a hospital before, I buoyed myself up during my incarceration in this coffin with the prospect of a bath and a good square meal on arrival. But blessed

are they who expect nothing, for they shall be satisfied. For my bath I got a lick and a promise, and for our meal we each had one boiled egg and a cup of cocoa ; and it was only due to the kindness of the sister-in-charge that we got that. It was also due to her kindness that my wife was allowed to have a shakedown in my room for the night instead of being bundled out to seek lodgings elsewhere. There is no gainsaying the fact that our reception that night was an awful disappointment to us both. It was due more to our ignorance of what could be provided at an institution of the sort than anything else, as, having secured a room in the private or paying ward in the hospital, we laboured under the delusion that we would be able to order pretty well what we wanted and do pretty well as we liked. We were soon to find that we could not, and that in a paying ward, as in a public one, there are hard and fast rules which have necessarily to be observed. At the same time, looking back upon my experience, I cannot help thinking that the hospital, as a hospital, was very far from being up-to-date, or even as comfortable as it might have been. Like most hospitals in India it was a Government institution, and like most Government institutions of which I have had experience, it was understaffed and generally undermanned. There were no properly trained nurses, and the staff of servants was inadequate even for the purpose of keeping the place decently clean. But as the building in which I lived has since been condemned and knocked down, let us hope the new one erected in its place is all that one can wish it to be. Let us also hope that by this time the Government has opened its purse-strings and supplied the hospital

with a decent up-to-date motor-ambulance in the place of the meat-safe which caused me such unnecessary pain. As to my treatment there I can never be sufficiently thankful for it. From Colonel Pilgrim, I.M.S., the superintendent, and Sister Mary Frances, the sister-in-charge, down to the humblest servant on the staff, I received nothing but the greatest kindness, care, and attention. In fact it is entirely due to Colonel Pilgrim's skill and unceasing care that I still have a useful foot to jog along with. For the three and a half months I spent in that hospital my foot had to be dressed every day, and on no single occasion did anybody do that dressing but Colonel Pilgrim himself. When eventually I reached England and placed the medical history of the case before my old friend Sir Patrick Manson, he paid Colonel Pilgrim the compliment of saying that, considering the circumstances of the case and the long interval which had elapsed before he was able to operate, he considered the result reflected the highest credit on the operator.

It was my intention to terminate these reminiscences with my arrival at the Calcutta hospital, but they tell me I must go home with them, and though for the life of me I cannot see how they can interest anybody beyond those directly concerned, there is nothing for it but to comply. But before relating our experiences while in Calcutta, I may perhaps be permitted to revert for a moment to Jubbulpore, for it was here for the first time that I was stripped for a thorough examination. On discarding my shirt a beautiful impression of the pug mark of the panther was found on my left biceps. There it was black and blue, clear and distinct, with all three claw marks embedded

in the wound. It was important, in the first place, as showing the force with which the panther must have sprung on me, and in the second as a corroboration of my story. For be it remembered I was entirely alone when it occurred, and, though no Baron Munchausen, it was satisfactory to have independent and conclusive evidence as to the actual facts of the case.

The result of the first Röntgen-ray examination of the injured limb was to show that, when falling, the weight of my body must have been borne for the moment entirely by my right foot, by which the minor bones of the foot were driven in an upward direction and displaced. In the first instance the doctors devoted their energies to the replacement of these bones by pressure, and my initial introduction to an operating theatre, though ineffectual in its result, was, I am credibly informed, of a highly entertaining character to those in attendance. After waiting a day or two, with my foot bound up as if it belonged to nobody, the X-ray was again brought into play, only to show that the attempt at replacement was futile. It was then decided to remove the bones, but as by this time the foot was about the size and shape of a Rugby football, the operation was not only difficult, but, owing to the fear of gangrene setting in, dangerous. My second visit to the operating chamber was curiously enough on the very day His Majesty the King—then Prince of Wales—made his state entry into Calcutta, and only a short time before I had, as a guest of Judge Russell who was on the reception committee, gone down to Bombay to receive him when he first landed in India. This was on the 29th December 1905, and it was then definitely decided that I

could under no circumstances return to the charge of my District. All this time a *locum tenens* had been officiating for me, and he was kind enough to allow Beatrice and the child to remain in the house while my wife was with me in Calcutta. May now telegraphed the news to her sister, and asked her to make a start on dismantling the house and packing up until such time as she could leave me and rejoin her. Mr. W. E. Ley, who was acting for me at the time, was kindness itself, and did everything in his power to assist Beatrice in her thankless task. Some ten days afterwards, when the doctors were able to pronounce me out of danger, my wife returned to Damoh—but by this time Ley had been replaced by the man appointed to the permanent charge of the District. The newcomer was naturally anxious to get himself and his belongings settled with all expedition into the house set apart for the occupation of the Deputy Commissioner of the District, which necessitated its early evacuation by my party. The dismantling of a large and fully-furnished bungalow at a moment's notice is a man's work at the best of times, and what these two women would have done but for the kindness of the other officers of the District and their wives, neither of them quite know ; and I attribute to the difficulties they were placed in and the worries they endured at this time my sister-in-law's subsequent serious illness. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, and Mr. Parsons, the Forest officer, were indefatigable in their assistance and hospitality, and I can never thank them sufficiently for what they did for us all on this occasion.

Sir Andrew Fraser, my old chief, was Lieutenant-

Governor of Bengal at this time, and though he had the whole weight of the responsibility of the visit of the Prince on his shoulders, he never for a moment forgot that, close to his palace, he had in the Calcutta hospital an old and damaged C.P. officer. He and Lady Fraser were constantly looking me up, and awaiting their arrival were invitations for May and Beatrice to the big ball they were giving in the Prince's honour. It took place on the day after their return from Damoh, and one condition I made on their going was that they should visit me on their way to enable me to pass them as fit to enter the presence of royalty. Needless to say I was delighted to see them once again in their war paint, though I well remember noticing at the time that while Bob was looking as pretty as ever, she seemed decidedly below par. Two days after the ball my wife came along as usual in the morning, only on this occasion without her sister, saying that she had a slight attack of fever and was confined to her room. The following day Bob was brought along to the very hospital I was in, suffering from a high fever; and that same evening she was removed to the segregation quarters. The next morning came the awful announcement that she was suffering from smallpox! Imagine the feelings of my poor wife at this time. All alone, in an apology for an hotel, with her husband in one hospital and by no means out of the wood, her next dearest friend and relative in the world stricken with this fell disease and carted away at a moment's notice to another hospital, at least ten miles distant, and without the possibility of even seeing or hearing from her, or being able to assist her in any way. Added to this she had the anguish of

knowing that her child had put her arms round her sister's neck and kissed her in a stream of tears as she left the hotel ! What were the awful possibilities in her mind each night as she laid her head on her pillow and sought in vain for sleep ? I always maintain that, of the three of us, her case was the worst, and it was only her large heart and her great pluck which enabled her to bear up against these successive blows. It was now that Sir Andrew Fraser proved the good friend he has always been to me and mine. Nothing he could do—and it was naturally a good deal—was left undone, and it was due to him, and to the unceasing care and kindness of Major Vaughan, I.M.S., the head of the smallpox hospital, that Beatrice recovered from the attack and left the hospital without even a mark to show what she had been through. She undoubtedly contracted the disease while up at Damoh, and she was, strangely enough, the first European ever to do so. But then she had not been vaccinated for over seventeen years ! How we all got through this awful period of anxiety and sickness unto death will ever remain a mystery to me.

Early in February I was beginning to convalesce and was allowed out for an evening drive in a huge barouche, into which I was carried on one of the hospital cots, and it was in the carriage one evening that I first saw our dear old Bob after her release ; and while noticing the great change in her, she likewise noticed a great change in me, for it is a positive fact that during this awful period of suspense my hair went, temporarily, quite white. For the ten days succeeding Beatrice's incarceration in the hospital I don't think I

slept a wink, fearing that each morning I should find either the wife or child, or both, down with the same fell disease.

When well enough to travel, Bob and May went for a trip to the Hills in Darjeeling for a change, and eventually the former was able to leave for Bombay on her return journey to Australia. What a termination to all the plans we had made for giving her the time of her life ! And verily it was the time of her life, but not quite as we meant it to be. In the meantime I was progressing as well as could be expected. But it was a long job, and the daily dressings of the foot were exceedingly painful. Since then, as you know, I have been operated on for appendicitis, and the dressing of this wound, which necessitates the removal of a tube from one's very vitals, was as nothing compared to the dressing of the injured foot. Each day for at least six weeks it left me moaning in pain, and the wife tells me the number of handkerchiefs I bit to pieces in that time was quite a costly item in the account. One day a pal of mine came to see me, and, finding me in this state, inquired what it was they did to me which caused me so much pain. My reply amused him. I said, "Well, old chap, I don't quite know, for I've never yet summoned up sufficient pluck to look at the beastly thing, but from my sensations I can only guess that after pulling all the dried stuffing out of the wound they set about and rake it with a garden rake. They then proceed to scour it out with some raw carbolic acid—in the meantime probing it with a red-hot skewer ; and to complete the performance, and to ensure against any foreign matter being left in,

they fill the wound with kerosene oil and set a light to it."

And that reminds me of a somewhat amusing interview we both had while in the hospital. A certain Austrian count, whose name I now forget, had been admitted suffering from a severe attack of typhoid. He was in the room next to mine, and when getting better my wife used to take him picture papers and flowers and generally look after him, and later on he accompanied us at times on our evening drive. He was a charming little man and we were all quite sorry when he left. On coming in to bid us good-bye, when my wife was sitting on my bed, he said, handing me his card, "Good-bye, Mr. Coxon, and I thank both you and your kind wife very much for all that you have done for me. I hope when you are able to come to Europe you will visit me in my home at Vienna, when I shall be delighted to show you all the hospitality in my power. If, Mr. Coxon, you come as a married man, I will show you Vienna and Buda Pesth as a married man. But if as a bachelor, then I will show you Vienna and Buda Pesth as a bachelor. Good-bye." I don't of course know of any difference or distinction myself, and unfortunately so far have not had the opportunity of putting it to the test.

Having been Private Secretary in Calcutta years before, quite a number of old friends used to come and see me, and amongst them was my old brother officer Puttock of the *Kwangtung* days, who I was glad to find had a good appointment under Government and was doing remarkably well. Just before leaving Calcutta, Sir Andrew asked us to a garden-party at Belvedere,

and it was here that the "panther man," as I was familiarly known in the hospital, held his great reception. Lying back in a long-sleeved chair in those beautiful grounds, amongst a bevy of charming ladies all anxious to be introduced to the "panther man," suited the P.M. down to the ground, and he was quite grieved when darkness put an end to it. It was on this occasion that I had the pleasure of meeting Her Excellency Lady Minto, the Governor-General's wife, and her beautiful daughter Lady Eileen. Both of them, being keen shikaris, insisted on having a full account of the adventure, and they were much amused by my reference, in relating it, to the one and only song I have ever been guilty of attempting to sing. It is a song called "The place where the panther should have died," and, though no Caruso, I was always called upon to sing it at our annual Commission dinner at Nagpur. It is of course a parody on that good old song "The place where the old horse died," and it is sung to the same tune. It relates in verse the story of a sportsman sitting up one night in a tree over a kill with a view to encompass the death of a panther, and in it the following words occur :

"Was he hit ? I scarcely hoped it, was he grazed ? I couldn't tell ;
I had watched for three long hours in the dark,
Waiting vainly for the moonlight, and often thinking, well,
This isn't quite my notion of a lark ;
And I sometimes wondered too if that lucky panther knew
How close my bullet must have passed his hide ;
Would he carry to his grave a remembrance of the shave
He had that night on which he should have died.
I have never met a man as yet quite rash enough to state
That janwars we have shot at here below
Will serve as running targets when we pass the golden gates,
But I for one would like it to be so ;

For if ever in the end, I meet my spotted friend
In this world here or on the other side,
I shall blaze at him once more, and I'll lay you six to four
That I'll place a twelve-bore bullet through his hide."

But in my case the position was somewhat reversed,
and it is the sportsman who will undoubtedly "carry to his
grave a remembrance of the shave he had that day on
which he might have died !"

CHAPTER XXXV

My third visit to the operating chamber—Visit to a French doctor at Marseilles—Our trip home—The captain's remark about the fish—We put a night in at Genoa—We arrive in London—My dilemma about yet another operation—Ascertain Colonel Pilgrim is home on leave, and he relieves my anxiety—Am invalided from the service—The Dover harbour—A merry luncheon party on board the flagship—His Majesty King Edward VII—A touching episode—Folkestone and farewell

AFTER yet a third visit to the operating chamber, when my damaged shoulder was also attended to, the joyful news was announced to us that we could now make our arrangements to leave for home about the end of March. As, however, I was not allowed to make the overland journey across to Bombay—from which port all the best mail steamers sail for England—our choice of a ship was limited to anything we might be able to secure in Calcutta. And even this was none too easy a task, as, owing to the royal visit, there had been an enormous influx of visitors to India all anxious to leave before the hot weather set in. Eventually we had to close with the only available accommodation on offer—that of the S.S. *Ghoorkha* of the British India Line. She was a slow old tub of a thing, over forty years old, and quite out of date. But, if unfortunate in the choice of a ship, we were delighted to find that we should have the pleasure of the companionship of Sister Mary Frances, who, being due for leave home, had decided to accompany us. My foot still required dressing daily, and what we should have

done on board without her I for one don't know. And that reminds me of rather an amusing incident which occurred to us both at Marseilles. The wound in the foot had been progressing very favourably until we got into the cold weather north of Suez, when it started jibbing. Nothing would induce Sister Mary to consult the ship's doctor, and, as he was not a man to inspire one with confidence, it was decided to abide by the sister's advice and seek the assistance of a French doctor on our arrival at Marseilles. Unfortunately neither Sister Mary nor myself were what you could call experts at the language, and at the interview which followed in the consulting-room at Marseilles we arrived more or less at a deadlock. All that Sister Mary wanted the doctor to do was to examine the wound and prescribe a fresh dressing. The doctor, on the other hand—as far as we could gather from his volubility and his gesticulations with a knife—was bent on making a fresh incision, with a view no doubt to accelerating the healing process. This the sister would not hear of, and what with her bad French, the doctor's execrable English, and my attempts at both, interlarded with occasional swear words in Hindustani, things were rapidly becoming a bit involved. But in the end it seemed to flash across the little Frenchman's mind that he had in front of him two harmless English lunatics who by the constant repetition of the word "graisse" induced him to realise that, like Pears' soap, they would not be happy till they got it. He gave us his prescription, which by the way was an excellent one, and amidst fervent protestations of goodwill on both sides we made our escape. But for the time being while he had my

foot encased in a very firm mechanical grip, it was about level betting on the doctor having his own way. Still, I always had my crutches in reserve !

Knowing the age of the ship, and that it was to be her last voyage previous to being broken up, we did not look forward to much in the way of luxury or comfort on board, but on the other hand we did not anticipate the utter dreariness of the voyage we were in for. Full up of invalid women going home for the sake of their health, fuller still of squalling children for whom there was neither proper accommodation nor food, pandemonium reigned from the time we got up in the morning until we retired at night, and the only consolation we had on laying our heads to rest was that one more day was knocked off the journey. I have made many voyages in my life, but never one equal to that one, and being on crutches and not able to get about, the children seemed to live in a circle round me. In spite of calling at all the usual ports on the homeward run we were constantly running short of ice, fresh fruit, vegetables and fish, and I think the frozen limit in the way of catering was reached one evening at dinner, when my wife, smelling some particularly " niffy " fish, put her hand up to prevent it being shoved still further under her nose. We were the guests of honour and sat on the captain's right, who, noticing this slight to his table, said, " What's the matter, Mrs. Coxon ? It's quite all right, provided you take plenty of sauce ! " And to add to the winter of our discontent, the engines of the poor old thing were constantly getting so tired that they insisted on stopping at odd intervals for hours at a time ; until at last we began to fear that, like the

grandfather's clock, they would stop one day never to go again. How annoyed we used to make the poor skipper when on the cease of the thud of the engines we would remark, "What, tired again, Captain?" Never shall I forget our joy when, on reaching Genoa, we ascertained that either the cargo or the engines or a combination of both would necessitate the detention of the ship for at least twenty-four hours in port. Crutches or no crutches, nothing would have prevented me from taking advantage of that one day's liberty, and off to the shore we went by the first available boat. And the dinner we had that night in the hotel, the hot bath we wallowed in, and the big comfortable bed we slept in, will never fade from our memories. It was as an oasis in the desert is to the weary Bedouin in that inhospitable region of the world.

On arrival in London I forthwith proceeded to place myself in the hands of a certain very eminent London surgeon, and, acting on his instructions and under his supervision, went in for a strict course of massage. Twice a day for three months did a certified masseur come and pummel me about, and though the massage certainly did me a great deal of good, at the end of the treatment the foot was no nearer movement than when it was first started. At each periodical visit to the eminent one there was the same shake of the head, and when at the end of the course he found the foot still stiff and unpliant, he explained to me that the only alternative was yet another operation. And the worst of it was, the explanation of his decision was so simple and so plausible that it seemed to me conclusive. The achilles tendon, *i.e.* the one going down the back of the leg and round

the foot, had become contracted, and that, unless that was either cut or pierced and stretched, I should have a stiff foot and leg for the rest of my life. Neither the operation nor the alternative was a pleasing proposition, and being full up for the present of anything in the shape of knife work, I asked for time to consider my decision. It was now August and insufferably hot in London, so we decided to go into the country to think about it. For no other reason than a longing which came over me for a sight of the sea and the shipping passing up and down the Channel, we fixed on Dover for a visit, and finding some old friends there we took a furnished house for the rest of the summer. A few months' peace and then another visit to London, only to meet with the same unpleasant verdict, but what put my back up against consenting to the operation was the fact that though the surgeon said it was necessary, he would hold out no promise of a permanent cure. It would entail at least six weeks in bed and three months on crutches, and then, *in all probability*, the foot would become perfectly flexible. So that in the end it came to this, that the operation was experimental and the result problematical, while the pain and the expense—especially the latter—were absolutely certain factors. Was it worth it?

While in this state of anxiety and indecision we heard by the merest accident that Colonel Pilgrim of the Calcutta hospital was in England. Here was my chance, and it took me no time to decide to abide by his opinion. Getting hold of his address from the India Office, I wrote to him informing him of all the circumstances of the case, and asking him as a favour to meet

the eminent one in consultation. The letter took some days to reach him as he was travelling about, and as a matter of fact he only received it two days before sailing again for India. He was on short leave and it was of course impossible for him to comply with my request. He however very kindly did the next best thing. He wrote me very fully on the subject, and in his letter he gave it to me as his well-considered opinion that the cutting of every tendon in my body would do nothing to relieve the foot, and that if nature in course of time did not restore it to its normal duties, nothing else would. Armed with this letter I immediately went to London to convey the joyful tidings to my medical friend. Instead, however, of expressing satisfaction and congratulating me on the result of my action, he was to my astonishment none too pleased ; and when he found that Colonel Pilgrim had not had an opportunity given him of examining the foot, expressed surprise that he should have ventured on an opinion. Such was his gratitude to me for saving him from performing a painful operation on me !

I returned to Dover, and with a view to giving the Colonel's theory every chance we decided on taking a house in Victoria Park half-way up the Dover Castle hill ; for, as Arthur Roberts has it in his song, " You've got to go up to get down, and you've got to go down to get up," and it struck me that if anything could assist nature it would be this constant going up and getting down necessitated by living on a hill. Another inducement was the fact that our very great friends Mr. and Mrs. Frank Oliver lived at No. 18, and Colonel and Mrs. Davidson, old friends of my father's, at No. 14. It was about this time

that my leave expired, and on presenting myself before the Medical Board of the India Office, I was placed on the retired list. We lived in that house in Dover for three years, and I have no shadow of doubt in my own mind that it was this constant exercise on the hill which in the end did for me what no doctor could have done. For two years after leaving India I was a lame man and a nuisance to myself and everybody else. Anything in the way of games, riding, or shooting was out of the question, and life was indeed a dull routine in those days. With the knowledge always before me that I should be able to do nothing in the way of exercise, my object in settling on Dover was, as I have already stated, to get a good view of the shipping passing up and down the Channel, and I was greatly disappointed to find that the construction of the naval harbour had not only ruined the sea-view, but utterly spoilt Dover as a residential resort. And what a colossal sum of money has been wasted over this mad project ! For as a harbour it is worse than useless. It is dangerous. I once was fortunate enough to witness the Atlantic Fleet, consisting of five battleships under the command of H.R.H. Prince Louis of Battenberg, entering Dover harbour by the eastern entrance in a strong easterly breeze. Two only of the five succeeded in reaching and securing their moorings, and the other three, to save themselves from being piled high and dry amongst the bathing-machines on the beach, had to go full speed ahead out of the western entrance, and come back later on one at a time through the same entrance ! For ten minutes or so it was even betting whether these five battleships turning round like

so many teetotums, and costing together perhaps nine millions of money, would not be wrecked in this harbour, which was specially built to protect them at a cost of anything under six millions. It was only the skill with which the ships were handled which saved the nation from a shocking scandal. No wonder the Navy avoids the place now. We were once asked to lunch on a certain ship in the harbour, and when we got down to the landing-stage a note was put into my hand informing us that in the course of the morning the sea had smashed both gangway ladders to pieces ! It is not only dangerous to ships of large size, it is also useless for destroyers, for even in an ordinary breeze the swell in the harbour is so great as to make it practically impossible for those on board to get any sleep. The place may eventually be of some use as a refuge for submarines, but it seems a high price to pay for such a scheme.

And that reminds me of another luncheon party we subsequently had on board one of the flagships of the Atlantic Fleet. It was just after one of the big naval balls given that year in Dover in honour of the Fleet when my wife was asked to chaperon a bevy of extremely pretty girls, amongst whom was a particularly fascinating young Canadian we used to call the "Bud." Sitting after lunch over the "wine and walnuts," we were amusing ourselves with different quaint toasts, two of which were, I remember, somewhat startling. The first was, "Here's to the happiest days of my life spent in the arms of another man's wife." Shocking ? Not a bit of it. Very much the reverse, for the toast-giver in giving it is alluding to his own mother ! Then the "Bud "

with becoming timidity asked if she might be permitted to give one. Loud applause from all. Standing up with her glass in her dainty little fingers, and with her eyes sparkling with merriment, she said, "Here's to the Navy. Their arms our defence. Our arms their recompense. Fall in!" Very anxious were all present to do so, but they certainly refrained while at table. What happened subsequently history doesn't relate, but I know my wife found it a difficult job to keep her eye on all her charges when each was bent on inspecting a different part of the ship and all at the same time. And so the world wags.

How the mention of one thing leads to another; and it recalls to my mind that while the Atlantic Fleet was lying at Dover a midshipman gave us a delightful illustration of the adaptability of the "handy man." A serious explosion occurred on a large Russian emigrant ship while passing the Dover harbour, and a number of boats of the Fleet were sent off to render assistance. One boat in charge of a midshipman returned with a woman who had been badly injured, and who had to be taken to the hospital. The midshipman, on landing, and finding an empty taxi-cab at the station, naturally went to the man and asked him for the use of his cab. The man refused, saying that he had a fare and was going to wait for him. The midshipman pointed out that it was a case of necessity, and the fare would have to give way. The man again refused point-blank to have anything to do with the job. Whereupon the mid called upon him in the king's name to do what he was told, but without effect. The driver was surly and obdurate; and seeing that nothing was to be gained by further expostulation, the youth

wearing the king's naval uniform, calling up a couple of bluejackets, had the driver forcibly removed from his seat, put his patient in the cab and himself at the wheel, and drove the cab to the hospital. Good Mid !

And this again reminds me of another touching incident so typical and characteristic of the " first gentleman of Europe " that it demands mention. I can vouch for the truth of it, for it was told me by Colonel Owen, R.A., who was in command of the troops at Dover, and was in personal attendance on the King at the time it occurred. It was on the last occasion that the late King Edward crossed the Channel as King of England. The guard of honour had been inspected, and there was nothing left to do but to see His Majesty safely on board the steamer. As he was in the act of going up the gangway, one of the ship's hands, all begrimed with sweat and dirt, came running down it and met the King half-way. Completely paralysed with awe, he lost his head and refused to move. The King, seeing the predicament the poor fellow was in, and realising as only he could that he would probably get into trouble on his account, made straight for him, and shaking him by the hand inquired after his wife and family. There was no trouble in store for that man, and they do say that in honour of the shake he has not washed his hand since !

The late King crossed many times after that incident occurred, but always as the Duke of Lancaster, and during the whole time I was at Dover I never missed an opportunity of going down to take my hat off to him. As I write I can see him now, leaning over the side of the ship with his large cigar in his mouth and his dog Cæsar by

his side, and, while every inch a king, with a smile on his face that would have won approval from a man sentenced to be hanged !

Gradually I got promotion from crutches to two sticks, from two sticks to one stick, and finally to golf sticks, until you find me at the Folkestone Golf Club, in which place we now live, and whence I started on these reminiscences.

Going to sea in 1875 and retiring in 1906, it will be gathered that I am now something over thirty (?) years of age, and that during my time I have been consecutively sailorman, policeman, and civilian. It has perhaps been my good fortune to have a larger share of more or less interesting incidents in the course of this somewhat varied career than falls to the lot of the average man, and this must be my sole excuse for the unholy length of this narrative.

For the last ten years of my service it has been my very great privilege to hold charge of a District in India, and I am more proud of this honour than anything else I have done. It is in my humble opinion an honour any man may be proud of, for it bestows upon him the right to claim that he has had, at least, a small share in what the author of the *West in the East* well says "is the greatest blessing and the most splendid service ever rendered to one people by a stronger nation."

Adam Lindsay Gordon, the great Australian poet, in one of his grand but somewhat sad poems, makes the "sick stockrider" say towards the end of his life :

"I've had my share of pastime and I've done my share of toil,
And life is short—the longest life a span ;
I care not now to tarry for the corn or for the oil,
Or for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man.

"For good undone, and gifts misspent, and resolutions vain
 'Tis somewhat late to trouble ; this I know—
 I should live the same life over if I had to live again,
 And the chances are I go where most men go."

Hear, hear ! These words appeal to me as all his poems do, but being no " sick stockrider," I feel I can't quite endorse his view as to not wanting to live for " the corn or for the oil " ; and, in spite of being now a confirmed and contented loafer, I certainly do feel as if I should especially like to tarry a bit longer for " the wine that maketh glad the heart of man " ! At the same time, when missing a short putt for the hole and for the match on the eighteenth green, I feel a certain sort of satisfaction at the knowledge that " I've had my share of pastime and I've done my share of toil."

And for the very last time, kind readers, am I here reminded of the many good times I have had in the East, and the many good friends we have made there, and that over and above the privilege of having served a number of years as a District Magistrate in India, there is the still greater privilege of having worked and associated with some of the finest fellows in the world. To them, and to all my friends across the sea, I would ask to be permitted to extend an invitation which I received in a Christmas card only this year from one of them in Australia :

" We just shake hands at meeting with many that come nigh,
 We nod the head in greeting to many that go by ;
 But we welcome through the gateway our few old friends and true,
 The hearts leap up and straightway there's open house for you,
 Old friend, wide open house for you."

THE END





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